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# Polish Diplomacy and Romania during the Second World War

**Andrzej Dubicki**

*University of Lodz*

**Abstract:** After the Soviet strike on the Polish army on September 17th, having fought Germany since September 1st Poland, found itself in a tragic position. Consequently, it led chief Polish authorities as well as over 50,000 refugees, both civil and military, had to cross the Romanian border. The situation that ensued also impinged on political actions of other countries, including Romania, which was on friendly terms with Poland. Romania found itself in a difficult situation, bound to Poland by the military alliance directed against the USSR and committing both parties to military action in case of Soviet aggression. By now the Romanian authorities were under German pressure and influence and have detained the Polish authorities on Romanian territory. These was acted within an official manner, a fact of which the Polish side was not aware. The suspension of diplomatic relations between Romania and Poland at the end of 1940 did not mean a complete break. The Polish authorities forwarded an initiative called the "Continental Action", an initiative that played a significant role in the history of Polish-Romanian diplomacy. The "Continental Action" was created to maintain contact with Romania. It may be also added that for nearly three years the "Continental Action" was the most important means of such contact. The effort put into the "Continental Action" activity - while Romania, eventually, left the axis coalition on terms than were unplanned - was still valid because it made the Romanians realize what their true position was regarding Poland, in prospect to the inevitable victory of the Allies.

**Keywords:** Second World War, diplomacy, neutrality, international law, „Continental Action”

**Rezumat: Diplomația poloneză și România în timpul celui de-al doilea război mondial.** După atacul sovietic din 17 septembrie asupra armatei poloneze, armată ce a luptat împotriva Germaniei încă din 1 septembrie, Polonia s-a regăsit într-o situație tragică. Drept urmare, autoritățile poloneze precum și 50,000 de refugiați, civili și militari, au fost nevoiți să treacă frontiera în România. Situația din Polonia a avut și o reverberație politică în relațiile sale cu alte țări, inclusiv România, țară cu care Polonia avea relații amiabile. România se afla într-o situație dificilă, având un acord militar cu Polonia împotriva URSS-ului, acord ce obliga ambele părți să intervină militar în cazul unei agresiuni sovietice. Însă autoritățile române erau în sfera de influență a Germaniei ceea ce a dus la reținerea autorităților poloneze pe teritoriul României. Acest fapt a avut

loc sub o directivă oficială, lucru de care polonezii nu au știut. Suspendarea relațiilor diplomatice dintre România și Polonia în 1940 nu a însemnat o totală încetare a acestora. Autoritățile poloneze au înaintat o inițiativă diplomatică, "Acțiunea Continentală", care a jucat un rol istoric important în relațiile diplomatice româno-poloneze. "Acțiunea Continentală" avea scopul de a menține relațiile cu România. Ar fi de adăugat că timp de trei ani "Acțiunea Continentală" a fost cel mai important acord. Efortul depus pentru "Acțiunea Continentală" - după ce România a părăsit coaliția Axei în condiții neprevăzute - a stat la baza la acțiunilor viitoare ale României în relațiile sale cu Polonia, considerând inevitabila victorie a Aliaților.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Al Doilea Război Mondial, diplomație, neutralitate, drept internațional, „Acțiunea Continentală”

### *The period up to the suspension of the diplomatic relations - 4 November 1940.*

After the Soviet strike on the Polish army on September 17th, having fought Germany since September 1st. Poland found itself in a tragic position. Consequently, it led chief Polish authorities as well as over 50,000 refugees, both civil and military, to cross the Romanian border.<sup>1</sup> The situation that ensued also impinged on political actions of other countries, including Romania, which was on friendly terms with Poland. Romania found itself in a difficult situation, bound to Poland by the military alliance directed against the USSR and committing both parties to military action in case of Soviet aggression. The unreality of this commitment in the then conditions was obvious and the Polish government, while still on their home territory, released the coalition partner from that obligation, at the same time counting on a favourable approach of the Romanian authorities towards their *droit de passage* request.<sup>2</sup> Regarding this matter, the Romanian authorities, remaining under German pressure, had already committed themselves, however, to detaining Polish authorities on their territory, as far as these acted officially; a fact of which the Polish side was not aware.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Dubicki, *Wojenne uchodźstwo polskie w Rumunii w ujęciu statystycznym, [w:] Druga wojna światowa na tle stosunków polsko - rumuńskich*, Suceava, Dom Polski, 2000, p. 164-174.

<sup>2</sup> J. Beck, *Ostatni raport*, Warszawa 1987, p. 197 -198; T. Dubicki, *Internowanie płk. Józefa Becka w Rumunii (IX 1939 -VI 1944)*, Opole, Centralne Muzeum Jeńców Wojennych, 1997, p. 9-13.

<sup>3</sup> The government message from 15 September defined that „The people who had been holding a political office would be obliged to settle in the appointed places, abstaining from any political activities.”. As cited in A. Karejchi, L. Eșanu, „Demnitari polonezi refugiați în România la începutul celui de al doilea război mondial”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A.D. Xenopol"*, XX/1975, p. 149.



The question of the conditions on which the authorities moved to Romania is depicted in different manners, the core of the problem lies with understanding the intentions of the principle of *hospitalite ou droit de passage*.<sup>4</sup> Apart from clarifying that issue, which became a complicated problem for Romania in relations with western countries,<sup>5</sup> the authorities of Romania also made a stand in Moscow. The major task was assigned to Dianu, an Romanian envoy, who on the morning of 17th September passed a diplomatic note to Bucharest. The text was later passed by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov to Waclaw Grzybowski, the Polish Ambassador in Moscow. However, the note was not accepted by Ambassador Grzybowski. When passing the note to Dianu, Molotov also declared that the USSR will adopt a neutral policy as far as the relations with Romania are concerned.<sup>6</sup> Commenting on that issue, Minister Grigore Gafencu made a reference to the Polish authorities' intention of moving to Romania, which had already been reported to him, and stated that in such circumstances it is understandable that Romania cannot give up its neutral position, "... which it will continue to use in its entire appropriateness".<sup>7</sup>

On the subject of maintaining full neutrality by Romania, Minister Gafencu told his envoy in Moscow "to ask the Commissar for Foreign Affairs to publicise immediately the resolution concerning a neutral position towards the USSR."<sup>8</sup> This position was then propagated in the Romanian press, which reported that: "The Bureau Of The Council Of Ministers communicates: The extraordinary circumstances in which the events in Poland and Romania took their course on September 17th as well as the fact

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<sup>4</sup> J. Beck, *Ostatni raport*, p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> In the case of the passage of the Polish authorities the French ambassador, Adrien Thierry intervened on 20 September 1939 with Prime Minister A. Călinescu. He presented the stand of the French Prime Minister, Eduard Daladier, „concerning the transit demanded for the Polish government”. Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe București (AMAE), fond 71/1920-1944, Polonia, vol.60, f. 330, telegramă cifrată 20 septembrie, nr. 58990/939; The Undersecretary of State Foreign Office Orme Sargent in the conversation with Minister Viorel Tilea stated that "The right of the Nations does not allow for the internment in this case, merely the right to the free transit". AMAE, 71/1939, E. 9, vol. 75, f. 51, telegramă descifrată, Legațiunea din Londra, 21 septembrie; A similar stand was taken by an American Minister in Bucharest who considered the internment of the Polish authorities as the violation of the international law. *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej na arenie międzynarodowej. Zbiór dokumentów*, Warszawa, Państwowy Instytut Naukowy, 1965, doc. nr 47, p. 87.

<sup>6</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1920 -1944, Polonia, vol. 60, f. 326, telegrama cifrată nr. 58033, 17 Septembrie 1939.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 328, Excelence Dianu, Legation Roumanie, Moscova, Nr 58342/1939.

that the Polish Government asked the Romanian Government for permission to host their head of State and his ministers, who withdrew onto our territory, means that Romania preserves strict neutrality towards those currently at war. The government will continue to watch over the safety of the country's boundaries with full patriotism."<sup>9</sup> It seems that such highlighting of Romania's neutrality was closely linked with the fact that under the alliance with Poland it was obliged to military action in case of Soviet aggression. The Soviet side knew about such an agreement, it was also the subject of their earlier inquiries both to Romanian side (the visit of the deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vladimir Potiemkin in Bucharest on 8 May 1939) and the Polish one (the talks between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs Molotov with Polish Ambassador Grzybowski). In Romania's opinion, Soviet government's diplomatic action showed quite a special interest in either extending or voiding the Romanian-Polish treaty. They were also interested in the allies' attitude towards a war against Germany. Commenting on this subject Gafencu said: "For the time being Poland and Romania are not quite obliged to come to (each other's) immediate rescue in case of an attack coming from the West".<sup>10</sup> Polish Ambassador in Moscow, on the other hand, was to inform Molotov that Polish alliance with Romania binds both parties to retaliate German aggression, too! This was commented by envoy Dianu in a telegram from 13 May 1939, where he pointed out to Gafencu that Ambassador Grzybowski's opinion was in disparity with the Romanian stance presented to Potiemkin.<sup>11</sup>

The course that the war campaign in Poland took place meant that the Romanian authorities had to take a clear stand on the events and, additionally, German diplomacy also pressed for such a declaration. It was announced that the declaration would be made during a cabinet meeting on 4th September 1939, but in the end the task was assigned to The Crown Council, which on 6th September unanimously decided to strictly follow the rules of neutrality, quoting international conventions' agreements.<sup>12</sup> Gheorghe Tătărescu made a statement typical of Romanian politicians' moods at that time, saying that Romania had three enemies and that meant the army had to guard the borders. With reference to Poland, he mentioned moral commitments towards it, as it was an ally. Referring to the declared neutrality he stated: "In that neutrality, we must consider the realities of the

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> AMAE, fond 71 1920 -1940, Polonia, vol. 60, Istorical relațiunilor româno-polone, 17 septembrie 1939, f. 367.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 368, telegrama cifrată nr. 30366.

<sup>12</sup> *Affaires Danubiennes. Revue de l'Europe Centrale et du Sud - Est*, septembrie 1939, București, nr. 5, p. 290.

Polish-Romanian relations [...] When the next Peace Congress comes, we should have arguments in support of our friendship.”<sup>13</sup>

The German side paid close attention to the Romanian authorities' moves and showed dissatisfaction whenever they thought Romania did not properly abide by the declared neutrality. On 16 September such a judgment was made by dr Wilhelm Fabricius, German envoy, who protested fervently against what was an accomplished fact, namely, the permission to transfer Polish gold across Romania. In reality it was transferred in secret, and with permission granted by the Romanian authorities, to Constanta, from where it was sent by a British ship to France. Gafencu answered the German diplomat that he had never hidden the fact that permission was given to transport the gold across Romania, since it was treated as any other cargo; however, he supposedly denied accepting a gold deposit.<sup>14</sup> That last statement may be treated as a dodge on the minister's part, as the Polish side never asked for the gold to be deposited.

In preparation to receive the Polish refugees the Romanian authorities took many steps, which later allowed them good existence. However, the unsolvable problem was the stay of the Polish authorities' representatives in Romania, who, even after resigning from their functions, remained interned. The newly established Polish authorities in Paris maintained their representation in Bucharest as before (until November 4th 1940), which they used to influence the refugees milieu. The effectiveness of that action was proven by the fact that out of 25,000 soldiers, who found themselves in Romania in 1939, only 1,600 remained there in 1941. Most of the refugees entered the Polish troops rebuilt in France.<sup>15</sup> In the end, around 3,500 of refugees, mainly civilians, remained in Romania until the end of the war.

Both governments' priorities diverged considerably in the course of wartime, the evidence of which was the suspension of diplomatic relations in November 1940. However, nearly as soon as that happened Polish diplomacy made behind-the-scenes efforts to establish contacts with the Romanian side, with the opposition politicians at first and later with the Romanian authorities, too.

Before the course of this activity is described, a revision of the history of Polish-Romanian relations, which had their impact on the relations during the war too, will offer a good introduction to the subject. In general the bilateral relations were dominated by the tradition of good, centuries-old mutual relations. This also applies to the interwar period,

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<sup>13</sup> A. Călinescu, *Însemnări politice 1916-1939*, București, Humanitas, 1990, p. V.

<sup>14</sup> The cargo consisted of 70 tons of gold and covered the railway distance between Śniatyn and Constanța in several hours.

<sup>15</sup> In May 1940 the number of Polish soldiers in France amounted to 85,000.

when both countries were brought together by the military alliance against the USSR formed in 1921, which was to be renewed every five years. It should be highlighted, however, that certain tensions and disagreements appeared in that period, too. These regarded, for instance, the circumstances under which Poland concluded a non-aggression treaty with the Soviets in 1932, interpreted by the Romanian side as done without waiting for them.<sup>16</sup> The additional circumstances which caused the cooling of Polish -Romanian relations were the animosities between the Foreign Affairs Ministers - Józef Beck and Nicolae Titulescu. The time of tensions in the bilateral relations ended with the resignation of Minister Titulescu, in which Polish diplomacy played a role.<sup>17</sup>

Certain discrepancies between the actual Romanian and Polish policies continued in the period that followed, regardless of the military alliance renewed in 1936. They resulted from different priorities that each of the countries followed. An example of this was the question of Polish attitude towards the 1920 Trianon Treaty, which the Polish side signed, but did not ratify. This formed a good enough reason for Romania to ask the Polish ally for a clear statement affirming its territorial integrity. The problem was raised by Foreign Minister Victor Antonescu, who proposed during his visit to Warsaw in November 1936 that the Polish side takes such exact position.<sup>18</sup> As the Romanian side noted, in spite of Miroslaw Arciszewski's, Polish Minister in Bucharest, earlier reassurance that such a declaration would be made, Minister Beck refused to provide Romania with the expected safeguard. V.V Pella, a distinguished international law expert expressed a view (on this issue) that without defining and considering the guarantees demanded by the Romanians in 1936, article 1 of the Polish-Romanian guarantees from 1931, has no value (*nu are nici o valoare*), because Polish assistance is subordinated to military technical agreement, which, as V.V. Pella noticed, did not apply solely to the Soviet border.<sup>19</sup> Another

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<sup>16</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1920 - 1944, Polonia, vol. 60, f. 357-358, Istorical relațiilor româno -polone, 17 septembrie 1939; A. Dubicki, *Sojusz polsko -rumuński a bezpieczeństwo Polski w latach 1932 -1936 [w:] Polityka bezpieczeństwa Polski w XX i na początku XXI wieku* (red. T. Panecki), Częstochowa, Wydawnictwo AJD, 2008, p. 96.

<sup>17</sup> A. Dubicki, Nicolae Titulescu. *Portret polityka i dyplomaty*, Łomianki, LTW, 2010, p. 52.

<sup>18</sup> The text of the declaration was prepared by Vespasian V. Pella. It stated that the Treaty from 15 January 1931 obliged Poland to respect the territorial integrity of Romania and act against any external aggression directed against it. It also implied that Poland was to recognize the international legal titles, in which Romania received the guarantee of territorial integrity. AMAE, Istorical ..., f. 359.

<sup>19</sup> On the basis of the above V.V. Pella concluded : „The article 1 of the Polish-Romanian Treaty is a clear confirmation of the article 10 in the League of Nations Pact, which did not hinder Poland from pressurizing or using force against Czechoslovakia, however.” *Ibidem*, f. 360.

matter differing the allies was extending the alliance in keeping with the *erga omnes* formula, which was particularly exposed just before the outbreak of war. That issue was also the object of interest of the western countries, namely France and Great Britain, which insisted on the alliance extension that would also include German aggression. Alexandru Cretzianu cast light on the issue in the dissertation "The safety of Romania as part of international commitments". He points that the treaties signed by Poland and Romania with France and Great Britain in the spring of 1939 offered them assurance without being dependent on the transformation of the Polish-Romanian alliance, however, "we were firmly requested to enter the discussions on the issue."<sup>20</sup>

Minister Beck's resistance to the proposal offered by Minister Gafencu during his journey through Poland on the way to Germany (the talk took place between Kraków and Katowice, in a saloon-carriage on 17 April 1939) was unequivocal. He told the Romanian partner he does not want an extension or transformation of the Polish-Romanian treaty.<sup>21</sup>

Beck claimed that Romania did not need Poland to protect itself from a Hungarian attack, as it could effectively defend itself thanks to military advantage and the treaty with Yugoslavia. As for the Romanian support, if Poland was to become the object of a German attack, Beck described it as illusory because Romania would be forced to keep its army on the borders to repel a possible Hungarian or Bulgarian attack. From a Polish source, which is a note made by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Szembek, we can also learn that the executive commitments existing between the two countries make considerations for Russian aggression only [...] however, in case of other circumstances "the political guarantee agreement from 1931 would allow to develop them immediately, without the need to change the primary agreement."<sup>22</sup> An important element in the whole issue was the economical agreement made by Romania and Nazi Germany on 23 March 1939, which in Minister Gafencu's opinion was of great significance to Romania as stabilizing and clarifying its situation.<sup>23</sup> It is

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<sup>20</sup> Idem, *Securitatea României în cadrul angajamentelor internaționale*, 25 august 1939, f. 365.

<sup>21</sup> A. Dubicki, *Kwestia neutralności Rumunii w 1939 roku, [w:] Neutralność państw europejskich. Aspekty prawne, międzynarodowe i polskie*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo WSM w Warszawie, 2012, p. 155.

<sup>22</sup> Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (AAN), Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych (MSZ), Departament Polityki-Ekonom. Wydz. Wschodni, 6390, k. 28 (mikrofilm) after:; T. Dubicki, *Żołnierze polscy internowani w Rumunii w latach 1939-1941*, Łódź, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1990, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> G. Gafencu, *Preliminaires de la guerre a l'Est*, Fribourg, W. Egloff, 1944, p. 280.

difficult to prove a direct influence of those events on both sides' relations in September 1939. However, a slight disappointment of the Romanian side with the Polish diplomacy's attitude may have been there. This is partly how Minister Beck took it, which we learn from the information sent by N. Dumitrescu, an officer in the Romanian Foreign Affairs Ministry, who spoke with Beck in Slanic on 21 September 1939. Dumitrescu noted that in response to his question as to what he would like to convey to the Romanian government, Beck declared "with great bitterness as follows: 1. In the conversation with Ambassador Grigorcea (Grigore) which took place in Kutu, he asked for the right to pass through the country, which was granted to the members of the Polish government. That promise was made on behalf of His Majesty (Maiestati Sale). 2. A strict compliance with neutrality rules cannot effect in limiting the freedom to move as well as communicate with abroad, something that even genuine prisoners-of-war are not denied. (...) 4. He considers this situation unbearable and against the international law."<sup>24</sup>

The Polish-Romanian relations after September 1939 were much reserved, the result of the orders given to the foreign affairs administration by Minister Gafencu. This is clearly indicated by the report of the Romanian Ambassador in France, Richard Franassovici, from 8th November 1939, in which he refers to the order he had been given, according to which, [as he said], "I tried to remain reserved towards the Polish government formed in Paris, avoiding official contacts with any of the members."<sup>25</sup> Despite the limitations Ambassador Franassovici did not avoid such meetings, including those with Minister of Foreign Affairs August Zaleski and Deputy Prime Minister Stanisław Stroński. From a meeting with the former, which happened by accident during a visit to the Quai d'Orsay, he reported the courtly behaviour of Minister Zaleski, who "in an exceptionally warm way" expressed gratitude for the humane treatment and the hospitality shown to the Polish refugees.<sup>26</sup> More information was related to the meeting with Stroński, whom Ambassador Franassovici knew well from the times when he was a Member of Parliament in Warsaw. The ambassador described Stroński as a pivotal politician, which was quite true in those times, and as an enthusiastic supporter of a close alliance with France. Stroński declared that he very much wanted to send an official note thanking for the reception of the refugees, but that in light of the Romanian government's fragile

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<sup>24</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1920 -1944, Polonia , vol. 61, f. 16, Declarațiile făcute de Dl. Beck D-lui N. Dumitrescu la Slănic, 21 septembrie 1939.

<sup>25</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1939 E.9, vol. 75, f. 134, copie după raportul Ambasadei noastre din Paris nr. 789/8 noiembrie 1939.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*.

position, he limited himself to that form of gratitude. On that occasion Deputy Prime Minister Stroński addressed two requests to the Romanian authorities: the first one was to let President Ignacy Mościcki, now a complete civilian, to travel to Switzerland, stressing that that was a *tient à coeur* matter for the new Polish President, General Władysław Sikorski.<sup>27</sup>

The other request was to allow, unofficially of course, the Polish soldiers to move to France.<sup>28</sup> Of key importance to Romanian diplomacy was the declaration by the Polish Embassy's counselor, Alfred Poniński, which he made on behalf of the Polish Ambassador, Roger Raczyński during his visit to Minister Gafencu. There was a sentence there which stated that the Polish Embassy in Romania, which had an exclusive right to represent Poland in Romania, expresses its gratitude to the Romanian government for the warm and friendly reception experienced by the Polish refugees and that it approves of all the steps that the Romanian government had taken. Referring indirectly to the issue of the Polish authorities' internment he stated that it was a position "beyond the agitations and individual interests of some of the former ministers, who lived as if in a different world" and that "there were eternal Polish interests".<sup>29</sup> The comment made by Minister Gafencu, who had sent the information about the declaration to the Paris Embassy as well as the consulates in Washington and London, was of utmost importance. The minister emphasized the significance of the fact that the Polish Embassy in Bucharest took a stand consistent with the Romanian government and the means employed by that government, which reinforced its legal and political position. It must be noted that all this took place when the western governments exerted enormous pressure on Romania to allow the Polish authorities through. Minister Gafencu advised maximum foresight and discretion when using this new argument in talks with the western governments concerned and using it "only in case of inquiries from the representatives of the governments you are accredited by."<sup>30</sup>

Even though Counsel Poninski used this tone of voice on behalf of Ambassador Raczyński, still on 30 November when the ambassador

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 135; President Mościcki left for Switzerland with the Romanian authorities' knowledge and help on 25 December 1939.

<sup>28</sup> As early as 26th September Polish military attaché in Bucharest informed the Polish military authorities in Paris that 22 Polish soldiers left by train for France via Italia. Instytut Polski i Muzeum im. gen. Sikorskiego w Londynie (IPMS), A.XII. 55/32, Depesza 646 b, 26 IX 1939.

<sup>29</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1920-1944, Polonia, vol. 60, f. 330, telegrama cifrată, 20 septembrie 1939, Gafencu 58990/939.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

referred to his words from the day before he used the phrase “hastening to stress some of the omissions in that short exposé of facts”. The ambassador’s remark referred to the progress of the Polish-Romanian negotiations from 17 September. He reminded that the Polish authorities, with his help, asked the Romanian government the right of transit passage across Romania for the most notable persons in Poland. He accentuated that the question was the subject of talks with the Romanian Ambassador to Poland, Gricorcea, on Polish territory, and that the Polish ambassador himself, acting according to the government’s instruction, formulated a request to Minister Gafencu during the evening phone call from Czerniowce concerning the right of transit passage for the Polish authorities.<sup>31</sup> Strengthening his argumentation Ambassador Raczyński recalled the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs’s official aide-memoire from 26 September 1939, where “it was stated beyond a doubt” that in the talks from 17 September there was no mention of the Polish authorities’ taking shelter in Romania but rather of granting them the right of free passage.

What is important, Ambassador Raczyński added “Your Excellence as well as other representatives accredited by the Royal Government” did not once question the validity of the right to transit the Polish personalities, only stressing certain conditions, in particular those that concerned strict respect of Romania’s neutrality.”<sup>32</sup> Ambassador Raczyński’s letter had no greater consequence, other than the Romanian side’s letting President’s Mościcki go to Switzerland, which took place on 25th December 1939. It should also be noted that the Romanian authorities received legal interpretation of the situation of former Polish authorities, who resigned as government on 30th September 1939.

As soon as 10th October 1939 Vespasian V. Pella, already mentioned here, reasoned that the members of former Polish authorities staying on Romanian territory were decidedly and entirely private persons by then, which settled the question of their freedom to depart. To support this, he referred to the Hague Convention (from 18 October 1907), which states: “subjects of a state at war, not forming elements of an army may be removed, even forcefully, from neutral territory”. According to Pella, the

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<sup>31</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1939 , E.9, vol. 75, f. 147, Ambasada Republicii Polone, Excelenței Sale Domnului Grigore Gafencu, Ministru Regal al Afacerilor Externe, București, 30 noiembrie 1939.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*; It must also be added that the Romanian authorities in explaining the internment of the Polish authorities called up President Mościcki's proclamation sent from Post Office in Cernauți , which was considered to be an infringement of Romania's neutrality.



above created a situation in which “a neutral state has the right to give permission to depart to a different country, where they want to settle.”<sup>33</sup>

Quite independently from these remarks and opinions, the internment of Polish authorities in Romania was practically determined, and the deciding factor was the pressure that Germans exerted on the Romanian government to keep the status quo. Romanian’s attempt to get out of this deadlock and repudiate the commitment by appealing for international arbitration was futile and it was allegedly preceded by a German note informing that, in their opinion, letting the Polish authorities out of Romania was against international law. This suggestion was dismissed by the German side, who only reserved, “for the future”, substantiation of internment and they decidedly opposed the idea of an international arbitration.<sup>34</sup>

Another form of Polish-Romanian contact took place on 13 November in Rome, where the local Romanian Ambassador to Vatican, Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen, met Polish Primate, Cardinal August Hlond. His eminence asked to deliver gratitude to the Romanian government for the reception and the care for the refugees, he also sought the means of religious help for the refugees. Romanian help also included that of their Consulate in Lvov, headed by Ioan Popovici. On 30 October 1939 he informed his headquarters about a large number of passes allowing to cross the Romanian border that were issued – the last of these passes was numbered 3555. This information also tells us that after they crossed the border, the fugitives were detained by the Border Guards, who, according to the instructions they had been given, delegated them to the 8<sup>th</sup> division in Czerniowice<sup>35</sup>, where they were routinely questioned<sup>36</sup>. The question of the fugitives crossing the Romanian border entailed the danger of Soviet penetration of the border...., more so because there had been cases of Ukrainians doing so. Regarding this, the prefect of the Czerniowice district even appealed that the Lvov Council be forbidden to issue such passes and those fugitives that the Tribunal freed from responsibility be interned<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Arhiva Ministerului Apărării Naționale (AMAN), fond 916, dosar 12, f. 62, Situația juridică a conducătorilor statului polon refugiați în România.

<sup>34</sup> AAN, Mikrofilmy aleksandryjskie, Auswärtiges Amt, seria 216 H, kl. 462 636 [za:] T. Dubicki, *Żołnierze polscy internowani...*, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1939 E.9, vol. 76, f. 240.

<sup>36</sup> T. Dubicki, *Konspiracja polska w Rumunii 1939 -1940, T. I 1939 -1940*, Warszawa, Adiutor, 2002, p. 45.

<sup>37</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1939 E.9, vol. 76, f. 229-232. Prefectura Județului Cernăuți. Secția administrativă, Cernăuți, 16 octombrie 1939.

Similarly, Royal Resident Gheoghe Flondor appealed to reinforce border guards and gendarmerie<sup>38</sup>.

Formally speaking, Romanian-Polish relations after September 1939 can be called frigid on the Romanian part, who officially did not acknowledge a newly formed Polish government; however by maintaining official Polish representation in the form of an Embassy and a number of charity institutions they, in fact, acknowledged that the Polish state still existed. This attitude changed after Iron Guard and general Ion Antonescu took over power. A definite swerve towards the Third Reich meant a definite change towards Polish issues, which soon effected in putting pressure to end official Polish representation in Romania. The pressure was also put by Auswärtiges Amt, who on 12 September 1940 issued a statement through Bucharest deputy Wilhelm Fabricius that „friendly relations between the Reich and Romania cannot be reconciled with Romania continuing diplomatic relations with 'a pretended Polish government' (Scheinregierung) and tolerating the existence of Polish Embassy in Bucharest”<sup>39</sup>. The Embassy tried to postpone their leave, especially as the Polish government in London thought they should wait until the British legation leaves the Bucharest post first. Despite the efforts, they failed..., and the new Foreign Minister warned Ambassador Roger Raczyński against an approaching, yet unknown danger, some „coup de main” on the Embassy<sup>40</sup>. The scale of the resentment and pressure put on Ambassador Raczyński can be seen in an initial rejection to give warranty assurance for the departure of last mail, archives, radio-station and other documents. It was only after the Ambassador's threat that in this situation, he would close the Embassy by force and intern its personnel that the Romanian Foreign Affairs decided to agree for the Polish diplomats to depart this way<sup>41</sup>. This was possible after Alfred Poniński's negotiations, during which he was informed that Prime Minister General Ion Antonescu pressed for a quick closing of the Polish Embassy. It must be noted, however, that the closing of the Polish Embassy did not entail breaking diplomatic relations between the countries – this was an

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, copie de pe adresa Reziđenței Regale a Ținutului Suceava, nr. 495/Conf./1939 către Ministerul de Interne.

<sup>39</sup> As cited in: J. Sobczak, *Polska w propagandzie i polityce III Rzeszy 1939 -1945*, Poznań, Wyd. Poznańskie, 1988, p. 176.

<sup>40</sup> IPMS, Prezydium Rady Ministrów(PRM) sygn. 32/3, Odpis raportu ambasadora Rogera Raczyńskiego w sprawie zawieszenia stosunków polsko -rumuńskich, Stambuł , 30 listopada 1940 r. [after:]T. Dubicki, *Likwidacja polskich placówek dyplomatycznych i konsularnych w Rumunii - 4 listopada 1940 r.*[in:]*Teke Historyczne, Cahiers D'histoire - Historical Papers*, T. XX. London, PTH w Wielkiej Brytanii, 1993, p. 343.

<sup>41</sup> The consent was given by Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexandru Cretzianu.

interpretation proposed by Ambassador Roger Raczyński, who described the situation as “suspending” diplomatic relations<sup>42</sup>. What’s important, Jean Pangal, then in political exile, agreed with this interpretation when he said in 1942 that, in fact, Polish-Romanian relations were never broken<sup>43</sup>.

The closing of the Polish diplomatic post in Bucharest entailed a number of organisational issues, most importantly choosing the Republic of Chile's legation (a special Polish Office was created within it) to represent Polish interests in Romania. Chile represented Poland until 1942, when the representation was taken over by the Swiss legation. Another consequence of shutting down the Polish embassy was that the building where it resided was taken over by the German legation headed by a new Envoy Manfred von Killinger. Romania's agreement to this option was meaningful and in contrast to a similar situation in Sofia, where after Envoy Adam Tarnowski's departure, the building was taken over by Bulgaria - according to Romania's Minister Plenipotentiary Eugen Filotti's account<sup>44</sup>. From the correspondence between A. Cretzianu and Prime Minister I. Antonescu regarding this matter, we learn that Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was rigidly against such a solution, however, there were a number of instances when they were asked, and quite persistently, too, by the German legation about the permission to take over the Polish Embassy building. In doing so, the Germans referred to the earlier cases when they took over the buildings of the Austrian and Czechoslovakian legations. The talks with the German legation's employees Steltzer and Windecker were held by A. Cretzianu, whose stance on the matter did not fully satisfy the German side. On 25 May 1941, in view of continued German pressure, A. Cretzianu turned to Prime Minister for instruction whether he was to adhere to the previously adopted stance, or use the maneuver made by the Bulgarian government, namely, take ownership of the Polish estate with the possibility of giving it over to the German legation at a later time<sup>45</sup>. The conclusion that can be drawn from the above is that the final decision was made by Prime Minister Antonescu.

### *Romania in the Continental Action*

The suspension of diplomatic relations between Romania and Poland at the end of 1940 did not mean a complete breaking of these; the Polish side, who planned in long term, had the initiative and still saw Romania as a

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<sup>42</sup> IPMS, PRM, sygn. 32/3, Odpis raportu ambasadora Rogera Raczyńskiego...

<sup>43</sup> IPMS, A.9.VI.17/2, Sprawy rumuńskie,

<sup>44</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1939 E.9, vol. 125, f. 173, Legațiunea Regală a României Sofia, Domniei Sale D-lui General Ion Antonescu, Sofia, 13 mai 1941.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 186-189, nota de serviciu, 23 mai 1941.

stabilising factor in this part of Europe in the post-war order and political system. In the efforts to make it happen, an initiative called the "Continental Action" was created, which played a significant role and made the history of diplomacy; it had its roots in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior since as early as the end of 1940. At first, it was to be used as a way of reaching Polish societies spread across the whole world with the aim to penetrate these and possibly use for Alliance's military-political purposes in key moments of the war. This aim was soon complemented by tasks of a strictly political nature, which shows in the fact that it was achieved using political posts and emissaries. The focal point of the action was Lisbon, away from military actions but also an unofficial centre of political contact, especially for the countries at war. The scope of the action of this post, run by a former Polish Foreign Minister, aided in the field by Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kowalewski, was wide and included Italy, France, Romania, Hungary, Spain and Germany<sup>46</sup>.

Regarding the matter that is of interest to us – reaching Romania with political message that showed the possibility to leave the axis coalition: the Polish diplomacy took a number of initiatives, all of which were part of a general strategy called „The Tripod action” that was to result in Romania, but also Italy and Hungary, leaving the coalition.

On the basis of the materials stored mainly in the Polish Institute and Museum in London one can draw conclusions as to the main threads of Polish interest in Romania-at-war, including those that relate to its political life then, however limited by war conditions, but running unofficially. The text below does not do justice to this matter because its scope and multiple threads would make for a separate book. For our needs, we will limit this introduction to a few fundamental conclusions, starting with the sources of funding the “Continental Action”, which came from a special credit given by the British government. For instance, in 1943 it amounted to 100 000 British pounds<sup>47</sup>. The interest and support of the British for the “Continental Action” was very much in line with the Polish diplomacy's intentions, increasingly determined to seek contact with Middle European countries, and regarding this as its strategic task in relation to the post-war concept of a federation<sup>48</sup>. With regard to Romania, such steps were already made

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<sup>46</sup> T. Dubicki, *Rumuńskie aspekty w Akcji Kontynentalnej (1940 -1944)*, [w:] *Współcześni historycy polscy o Rumunii* (praca zbiorowa pod red. prof. T. Dubickiego), Toruń, Wyd. A. Marszałek, 2009, p. 239.

<sup>47</sup> IPMS, A.9.VI.1/17, Memorandum dla Komitetu Spraw Krajowych w Sprawie Akcji Kontynentalnej, Londyn, kwiecień 1954.

<sup>48</sup> T. Piszczkowski, *Między Lizboną a Londynem. Z sekretów dyplomacji polskiej w czasie drugiej wojny światowej*, Londyn 1979, p. 14.

before the "Continental Action" was started, which is seen in the correspondence between Jan Szembek with Romania's Foreign Minister Mihail Manoilescu<sup>49</sup>, which was conducted via a Romanian diplomat Jean Pangal in the summer of 1940. Another diplomat that proved useful in initiating and maintaining contacts with Romanian politicians was Viorel Tilea, a former Romanian envoy in London, who lost his post after September 1940. As soon as the beginning of 1941 he showed great initiative in his contacts with the Poles, which is proved by Polish Ambassador E. Raczyński's reports (the brother of a former ambassador in Romania, Roger Raczyński). We learn from these reports that on 20 January 1941 Viorel Tilea organised a meeting between ambassador E. Raczyński (in 1941-1943 also a minister-chief of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and a minister in the Czechoslovakian government Jan Masaryk. The Romanian diplomat presented his cooperation suggestions based on the Romanian National Committee<sup>50</sup>, formed in London in September 1940, whose aim was to create a Central-Eastern Europe Federation that was to include Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. From V. Tilea's presentation we learn that the Romanians National Committee saw a unique solidarity and shared aims between Poland and Romania but that in view of continued diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Romania ruled by General Antonescu, he was "hampered in outside appearances"<sup>51</sup>. Ambassador Raczyński related that the Romanian National Committee aimed to dissociate King Michal from General Antonescu's politics. The other organisation set up by Romanians in exile was the "Free Romanian Movement in USA and Canada" under the care of King Carol II as "Romania's Number One Citizen". J. Pangal was the link between the two organisations.

Communication between the "Continental Action" and Romania was to be effected by specially selected emissaries - initially Jerzy Kurcysz, Head of Polish Embassy in Istanbul was to be one of them. On 20 December 1940 he was told by the Foreign Minister Stanisław Kot to go to Bucharest with the aim to "expand communication through neutral channels so that contact can be maintained with Romanian opposition."<sup>52</sup> In the end, the

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<sup>49</sup> AMAE, fond 71/1939-1944, Polonia, vol. 61, f. 106-107, Legațiunea din Lisbona, telegramă descifrată nr. 640, 11 VIII 1940; *Ibidem*, Ministerul Regal al Afacerilor Străine, telegrama cifrată nr. 426069 (ministrul M. Manoilescu), 22 VII 1940.

<sup>50</sup> In the Committee there were, among others, ministers plenipotentiaries M. Costescu - Ghika, C. Laptev, Admiral Dumitrescu, the former Director General of the Propaganda Department, Dimăncescu, Jean Pangal.

<sup>51</sup> IPMS, sygn. A. 9.VI.22/2, 20 stycznia 1941 (ambasador E. Raczyński).

<sup>52</sup> J. Kurcysz, *Na przedpolu Jalty. Wspomnienia z tajnej służby w dyplomacji*, Katowice, Instytut Górnośląski, 1995, p. 72.

mission was given to editor Stefan Werner ("Ster") aided from Istanbul by Kurcyusz ("Ali") and Władysław Wolski ("Rafał"), newly transferred to Bucharest, who had a good contact with Romanian politicians because of his long diplomatic and consular service in Romania. Access to those politicians was of key importance to the "Continental Action" project. Its leaders especially recommended reaching the opposition as it was a group that could be useful in realising the "Continental Action's" political aims.

The first to send the sought-for information was J. Kurcyusz, who as early as February 1941 informed Minister Kot about the political situation in Romania, based on his talks with the Romanians resident in Turkey. He concentrated on Iuliu Maniu, seen as the opposition leader, whom he referred to by the Polish version of his name "Juliusz". From what Kurcyusz had gathered, Maniu did not accept V. Tilea's initiative, which was also confirmed by Professor Nevițescu, whom Kurcyusz believed to be the most excellent Maniu's emissary abroad and with whom he established close relation. Professor Nevițescu said that "Mr T's >> Mouvement Roumain Libre << is his private party and he cannot involve the Romanian society into it." The reason for such a stance were to be mainly Tilea's close relations with King Carol II, in whose defence Tilea even intervened when the king was interned by the Spaniards. That was enough to undermine his initiative, as Professor Nevițescu put it: "not only in the caranist environments but also among his old friends Carol is totally discredited by his glaring mistakes with regard to the August game"<sup>53</sup>. Without denying Tilea his good intentions, Professor Nevițescu was of the opinion that, even leaving the above aside, Tilea was not a person of high enough standing to aspire to the leadership of Romania's liberation movement<sup>54</sup>.

Other information coming from Istanbul, this time relating to Iuliu Maniu himself, shows that his followers outside of Romania came up with the idea to bring the caranists' leader abroad, which he nevertheless flatly denied. What is more Kurcyusz informed that a group of manists concentrated in Istanbul, although small in number, were forcefully working on the Transylvanian materials *ad usum* a future peace conference. The question of Romania reclaiming Transylvania from Hungary will come up many times in Romanian correspondence and political claims, irrespective of its political option. At the beginning of 1941 Kurcyusz was saying that Maniu followers were optimistic about the internal situation and they thought they were, in fact, the only organised force left on the battlefield that was not compromised. From Werner's (aka "Ster")

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<sup>53</sup> IPMS, A.9.VI.22/2, Stambul 5 lutego 1941 (J. Kurcyusz „Ali”).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*.

correspondence we learn about what happened later to the Romanian group from Istanbul - he writes that at the end of March 1941 it moved to Jerusalem, where, "financed by Intelligence Service entirely, it cooperates with the English in sabotage propaganda on the Romanian territory"<sup>55</sup>. Much evidence points to the fact that the group was in fact tantamount to political activists identified by "Ster" as Vlachs, who were linked to Maniu's rural party. Among them was Gheorghe Brodschi, known to Poles from the time when he was the leader of an academic Romanian-Polish friendship organisation. He gave Stefan Werner the address and password for the Bucharest-based trusted Vlach activist Pandora Pan, a "fanatical enemy of the Germans"<sup>56</sup>.

Checking out the situation in Romania by the Poles had one substantial aim: to probe the direction in which Romania's politics was heading - officially, but also the opposition's reactions towards it. There had been significant changes in this respect since Romania joined the war, as can be seen from the message Minister Kot received from Istanbul: "Political moods in Romania deeply changed since the war. Even Maniu accepted it as an international conflict"<sup>57</sup>.

Jan Librach "Arwa", who ran the "Continental Action" from Istanbul, Lisbon and Bucharest but also supervised it from London, turned specific attention towards the different options within Romania's politics, which fluctuated and whose core was in securing Romania's interests after the war. Unofficial contacts with Romanian politicians staying in or passing through Portugal also helped in shaping a realistic image of this politics, especially as quite often these politicians were in fact couriers or emissaries of the Romanian authorities. This is how Pamfil Seicaru's mission was seen when he came to Portugal as a delegate on a special political mission, carrying an official letter from his Foreign Affairs Minister. Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kowalewski met him several times, of which he reported in July 1941. According to his observations, the aim of the mission was ambiguous since Seicaru came with his wife and daughter and with a large amount of money on him, which may suggest escape from the country. However, officially "Mr S is on a mission to clarify the views of the most powerful forces in Portugal, Spain, France and Italy on the question of future peace in Europe and the form it can possibly take"<sup>58</sup>. From Seicaru's comment about

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, Informacje Wenera dotyczące Rumunii, 29 kwietnia 1941.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, Depesza „Stera” nr 293, 24 VII 1941.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, Dep. Nr 271 - Receptus na dep. Nr 100, Sztambuł, 8 sierpnia 1941, L. dz. K. 2008/41

<sup>58</sup> IPMS, A. 9.VI. 22/2, Lizbona 11 lipca 1941 (Jan Kowalewski).

the government's expectations of how the situation develops it transpires that Romania then was set on strengthening the alliance with the Germans and its main interest, but, he stressed, also main Polish interest, was in breaking the USSR apart: "Soviet Russia must be broken into parts, which in turn, must be under control. To make such control possible, Germany will need Finland, Romania and Poland (...). A war against the USSR may reconcile everyone, because conquering the USSR will pay for the entire war"<sup>59</sup>.

These expectations about the development of the international situation in 1941 were not confirmed, which can be seen in the Polish-Romanian talks that followed, but also in how these talks were evaluated, which became most apparent after the Stalingrad defeat. Before that happened though, the Polish partners received much information from Romania through their contacts with Maniu's circles and the Brătianu brothers. A lot of credit for this goes to Romanian legate in Turkey Alexandru Crutzescu and a former depute Costache Bursan. The leader of the rural party informed the Poles through Crutzescu that he thoroughly condoned the idea of a federal concept form of cooperation in Central-Eastern Europe. C. Bursan, the contact for the liberals, informed "Ster" about their priorities in politics, which he described as follows: "So, Romanian hopes are that the Reich vanquishes the Soviets and then is defeated itself by the Allies"<sup>60</sup>.

Those seeking the right path for Romania and the way out of the ally were joined by King Michael, who initially on his own account, sent signals of his personal pro-Allies attitude. It was particularly clear in September 1942 during the visit of Herescu, Professor at University of Bucharest, whom King Michael trusted completely, as Herescu was his teacher. Herescu contacted J. Pangal then and, through him, the Poles from the "Continental Action". The king's legate declared that he is absolutely against the axis and hates Germans. The king predicted that as the military and political situation developed he might have to take actively the highest state power and lead Romania in that decisive moment<sup>61</sup>. From Professor Herescu's report one could assume that the King's situation was very difficult given his close observation ordered by the *conducator*, the relations with whom deteriorated even more after the king removed from his milieu General Monoilescu, who had proven to be the marshal's spy. The King was

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*; J. Kowalewski : Tilea's opinions about Polish politics in Germany „are not reliable, and it seems they have little to do with what the Germans do and write about Poland.”

<sup>60</sup> IPMS, A.9VI. 22/2, Stanowisko rumuńskiego Stronnictwa Liberalnego, Poulne, „Ster” Stambul ,12 II 1942.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, Depesza szyfrowa L. dz. K 4990/43 Lizbona, 12 września 1943



actually afraid of attempts to deprive him of his throne and even of death. Despite the concerns, he ordered to organise a means of secret communication with the external countries, which was agreed with J. Pangal. The evidence of King's extraordinary determination was also the declaration that in the worst case scenario, should any circumstances appear which could arrest king's will or freedom and put his life at risk, "the opportunity to escape by plane is arranged, in which case its destination would be Turkey"<sup>62</sup>. It should be stressed, however, that some time later, in the middle of 1943, his actions coincided with M. Antonescu's activity and these were, in a sense, agreed with each other. This was reflected in the operations of the "Continental Action" and, as a little-known detail, the subject deserves further presentation. It mainly applies to the initiative from September 1943, which was sending a legate to Lisbon, to Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kowalewski ("Nart"), who, almost as an emergency, presented a few issues to be quickly decided, which were connected with the will to leave for Turkey that the king, M. Antonescu and part of the government had declared. It required previous arrangements as to when and how to capitulate, whether the king may maintain sovereignty there or whether he has to reach the Allies' territory. The aspect of signing the capitulation decree abroad was also raised.<sup>63</sup> The signal from Lisbon was treated with due attention and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tadeusz Romer, engaged to clarify and discuss the issue with, among others, Anthony Eden and his associates as well as Lord Selborn. In the opinion of the British diplomats the Romanian initiative would have been premature, and Minister Romer assumed that the British still remembered their recent mistakes with Italy and did not wish to repeat them. The reply sent on 15 September to M. Antonescu's legate in Lisbon, after it had been approved by Prime Minister Mikołajczyk, discussed the king and Prime Minister's premature initiative. It was ascertained that the implementation of their plan would lack practical consequence other than a one-time effect and consequently would not give the British any military assets, nor any serious political profits to the Romanians. Quoting the British politicians, the advice was to stay in place, make organised contacts through the Poles ("Continental Action") and prepare oneself for a better military situation.<sup>64</sup>

To give the full account of the operations conducted as part of the "Continental Action" related to Romania; it should also be noted that

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, Notatka do dep. szyfr. I. dz. K 4990/43, Lizbona 12 września 194; tajne, Londyn 14 IX 1943.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, Depesza szyfr. L.dz. K 4990/43, Lizbona , 12 września 1943.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, „Nart” Receptus 131, refero 142, Alarmowa, 15 września 1943.

contact was established with Marshal Antonescu himself. It was the initiative of Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kowalewski, who knew the marshal from the time when he was a military attaché in Bucharest (1933-1937)<sup>65</sup> and who sent him a letter mentioning "mutual interests of Poland and Romania and the willingness to maintain contact"<sup>66</sup>. Marshal's reply came as a declaration, forwarded by a trusted person. He declared the willingness to contact the Poles, as well as Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kowalewski. It was confirmed in the contacts between the "Continental Action" agencies in Lisbon and the Marshal's legates, Marius Cișmigiu and Colonel Kalin Botez, among others.

Thus, apart from the contacts with the opposition and canvassing its opinion, the leaders of the "Continental Action" analysed the Romanian government's stand and in 1943 reached an interesting conclusion that the Romanian government was running a reinsurance policy, described by the Poles as running on secondary rails, taking into consideration the changes where the two blocks fought. Polish diplomacy assessed that previous Romanian hesitation as to what direction they should choose had already been clarified. It was linked with the breach of relations between the USSR and Poland (the murder of the Polish officers in Katyń issue). The change that was happening in the Romanian stance accounted for the increasing role of the USSR as a decisive factor in Central and Eastern Europe after the war. It allowed to refine the elements of such an assurance policy, that included resignation from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, while still claiming Transylvania back. Poland saw this policy to be in keeping with that preferred by Yugoslavia and Benes, in that they both were equally pro-Soviet and anti-Hungarian.<sup>67</sup> According to the Poles such position was also presented by the internal (Maniu) and external Romanian forces, described as "unofficial Romanian policy" (Gafencu, Dianu, Devila, Franassovici and others). It was concluded that the policy of "seeking reinsurance headed in the direction, which was unfavourable for us [Poles], namely, giving up the East in return for possible recuperation from the West."<sup>68</sup> Moreover, Lisbon noticed the large-scale propaganda directed towards the foreign countries, in which 27 persons of the scientific and literary world took part. The action ought to be perceived as balancing the pro-Allies attitude, the evidence of

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<sup>65</sup> R. Majzner, *Attachaty wojskowe Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1919 -1945*, Częstochowa, Wydawnictwo AJD, 2011, p. 220 -226.

<sup>66</sup> IPMS, 19 .V. 1/11 Akcja Kontynentalna. Notatka dla Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych, Ścisłe tajne, Londyn 23 VII 1943; as Cite in: K. Dach, T. Dubicki, *Marszałek Ion Antonescu. Biografia żołnierza i polityka*, Łódź, *Ibidem*, 2003, p. 171-172.

<sup>67</sup> IPMS, PRM, L. 33, Synteza polityki rumuńskiej, Ścisłe tajne, Lizbona 6 lipca 1943.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*.

which was sending seven people to Germany, four to Italy and three to Slovakia. The rest inspected neutral countries: Switzerland, Poles Turkey and Sweden.

Rapid changes on the military and political arena, including Italy declaring war against Germany caused change in the assessment of the situation in Romania, which can be noticed in the assessment made at the end of 1943 by the Poles, including those engaged in the "Continental Action". The document "The Romanian Issue Memorandum" dated 20 October 1943, handed in to Italian deputy Prunas in Lisbon referred directly to a possible impact of Italy on freeing Romania from German custody. There was a sentence, among others, stating that the Romanian nation "placed all their hope in Italy and is certain that it will be understood by Italy better than by any other world power at war with Germany, because of the fact that Italy had the same experiences as Romania".<sup>69</sup> As regards the organisation of the post-war Europe, Romania, referring to the community and the bonds resulting from the Latin origin that unite the Italian and Romanian nations, declared close cooperation. It was perceived as a system of agreements and allies, which could take the form of a union or federation, creating a block of states spanning from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, whose mission would be keeping the Central and Eastern Europe in peace with the help and support of Italy and Poland. As regards the ways of the Romanian war exit it was made clear that "finding a practical way is of utmost importance, which would allow Romania to stand at the Allies' side right away, before the Soviet army reaches the Romanian boundaries."<sup>70</sup> In the document quoted there are traces of recent speculations regarding the position of King Michal. It was stated that all free Romanians "agree on the concept of defense and the preservation of the monarchy and their wish is for King Michal to leave Romania territory to form a government on the Allies' territory. If, however, as a result of events difficult to predict, King Michal would be unable to leave Romania, a provisional government would have to formed at once."<sup>71</sup>

The end of 1943 was the moment when the political contours of future Europe started to appear. The "Continental Action", which had monitored the Romanian affairs for three years, passed on its comments and conclusions to interested readers, including the British diplomacy and the Polish institutions in exile. An interesting document on the subject, which is,

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<sup>69</sup> IPMS, A.9.VI.22/3, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych (A.K.), Tajne, Londyn, 24 listopada 1943.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem.*

a sort of summary of the state of "Romanian issue", was passed on by the "Continental Action" to the Secret Service Department of the Commander-In-Chief's Board in December 1943. It was an ample study of the problem, and because it is a kind of summary of 3 years activities large fragments of it will be quoted here. We can gather from it that since the autumn of 1943, unofficial talks had been conducted, on behalf of Prime Minister Mikołajczyk, which, however, did not have any concrete results, partly because of the fact that the two Romanian parties in London were in conflict, but also because of the British indecisiveness relating to the Romanian issues.<sup>72</sup> The talks between the "Continental Action" employees and the Ministry of the Interior and a special emissary from Iuliu Maniu, with which they had high hopes, were an attempt to overcome that obstacle. It was planned that „Bureau d'Information de Roumains Libres" would be opened in London, and run by the Maniu's secretary, Pavel, with whom Pangal was to cooperate from Lisbon. The cost of operating the agency was to be covered by the "Continental Action". Regarding the employment of other people, the Polish Secret Services judged that neither Victor Cadere, nor Pangal, who were in Lisbon at the time, were empowered to talk to the Allies. They assumed that, if the Allies were willing to talk to the Romanians seriously, they would seek contact with Gafencu in Geneva or Dianu in Lisbon. Out of the people who resided in Lisbon, Kalin Botez was the one who was considered to be the most suitable for the talks, as he was Mihai Antonescu's trusted advisor and his direct subordinate, which left Deputy Cadere out of the way. It was also noted that recently Colonel Papescu as well as a young diplomat Marculescu came to Lisbon as a diplomatic courier. It was ascertained that Popescu had contacted Botez and was likely to submit a report from the talks both to Antonescu and the Secret Service Chief, Eugen Critescu.<sup>73</sup> As it was established Romanian activity had also been followed carefully by the German Secret Service, whose agencies in Lisbon, Madrid and Ankara had received special instructions regarding this.

The board of the chief commander (General Kazimierz Sosnkowski) also formed conclusions regarding Romania's current goals in the war, stating, among others, that Transylvania was Romania's main issue: "Both, people in power and the opposition consider the war to be lost and, consequently, Bessarabia lost for Romania. However, Transylvania may be in certain political circumstances claimed back. The Hungarians are a weaker opponent and one may hope that it will be possible to reclaim it from the

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<sup>72</sup> IPMS, A.9.VI.22/3, Sztab Nacz. Wodza, Oddział Informacyjno - Wywiadowczy, l.dz. 8257/N, 10 grudzień 1943.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*.

Hungarians this way or another.”<sup>74</sup> In the context of Polish interests, under those circumstances, Romania was abandoning true cooperation with Poland and, in case of Maniu taking over authority, one has to take into account the fact that he may seek an agreement against Germany with Russia and the Allies. At the same time a new phenomenon was discovered in Romania - the increase in pro-Russian sympathies and a shift towards the left with regard to social issues. Marshal Antonescu does not fight that, on the contrary, he protects them from the Gestapo in every way he can.

The last initiative which can be linked with the “Continental Action” activity in Lisbon was associated with the arrival of Camil Demetrescu on 15 December 1943, who came as a special diplomatic courier and a government emissary, being, in fact, Vice Prime Minister Antonescu’s emissary. Knowing the role and the connections of J. Pangal, he declared to him, on M. Antonescu’s command and in the presence of Deputy Cadere that the Romanian government is ready to agree to signing the surrender declaration to the Allies. The condition was that Romania is informed about the borders line and the method of occupation beforehand, with a suggestion that it’s “three-way”, namely American and British, in addition to the Soviet Russia. The best way to perform that operation was to move the government along with the king abroad.

The above was communicated to the British, who took a positive stance towards it, declaring the will to accept surrender in the time and place named by the Romanians. They also stressed that any further delay may only worsen the Romanian position and that the Allies may start bombing Bucharest “however, they do not have such wish and would rather avoid it”<sup>75</sup>. That initiative, irrespectively of the talks already conducted (in Stockholm) had a chance of success, but was practically ruined by another M. Antonescu’s emissary, Pamfil Seicaru. He arrived in Lisbon on 24 December 1943 and submitted a correction regarding the previous proposal, namely, that Romania would not surrender until it received assurance that it would not find itself under German occupation. This condition was revealed to Pangal and Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kowalewski, leaving envoy Cadere out. The British, when they found this out, stated that “in the future the Allies demand all the declarations of the Romanian government to be sent to their embassy only through official channels, via Romanian legation”<sup>76</sup>. In reality, it meant separating the Continental Action and reserving for it the role of a mere consultant, if at all.

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<sup>74</sup> IPMS, A.9.VI. 22/3, Sztab Naczelnego Wodza..., 10 grudnia 1943.

<sup>75</sup> As cited in: T. Dubicki, Rumuńskie aspekty..., s.268.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*.

The following events on the international and military stage brought new facts to light signaling the USSR rising in importance as part of the allies' coalition. That trace appeared already in 1943, and was pointed out in the reports by Ambassador Edward Raczyński, in charge of Foreign Affairs. In a conversation with Minister Eden he raised the question of the necessity to inform the Romanian and Hungarian partners about the expectations that the Allies had towards them. The British Minister replied that his government took calmly different information and suggestions regarding such contacts. The reason for this stand was revealed in the conversation between Raczyński and Strang, who informed him that his government is determined to act with great caution, making it clear that "the reason for it was their reluctance to get in the Soviets' way."<sup>77</sup>

At the beginning of 1944 the dissertation "Pro Memoria", developed by Jan Librach, brought interesting conclusions concerning the essence of the past and present Romanian policy. The text addressed to Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk, Minister of Foreign Affairs Tadeusz Romer and Minister of the Interior Władysław Banaczyk, discussed relations between Poland, Romania and Hungary through the "Continental Action". It was also an attempt to determine synthetically the present position of the countries regarding their war exit. Having at his disposal ample, three-year reference material, J. Librach drew interesting conclusions, which, with reference to Romania, saw the essence of its war policy as a consequence of role division between the major political figures: Marshal Antonescu, Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Antonescu, as well as Maniu and Gh. Bratianu, who remained in the opposition.<sup>78</sup> According to him, nearly the day after entering the war a special division of roles between the above appeared, which gives the impression of a true agreement. Both Antonescus were in favour of an uncompromised war against Russia, while the opposition leaders protested against taking part in the war, which they did by means of more or less confidential memorials, sent abroad or addressed to their own government. The evidence of such an agreement, although not necessarily a formal one, was reportedly the fact that until that time (1944) the Romanian government had not taken any drastic precautions to prevent anti-war opposition from spreading.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand the opposition did

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<sup>77</sup> A. Dubicki, *Rumunia w Akcji Kontynentalnej. Materiały źródłowe..* [w:] *Historycy polscy o Rumunii*, Dokument nr 5, Depesza szyfrowana, Londyn 21 kwietnia 1943 .

<sup>78</sup> IPMS, A.9.VI. 17/7, Pro memoria, 18 stycznia 1944(J. Librach, Londyn).

<sup>79</sup> However, short-term arrest of the opposition members took place, e.g. on 10 and 11 January when Maniu's apartment was inspected, his secretary A. Leucufia and his legal advisor Ilie Lazar were arrested. IPMS, A. 9.VI. 22/2, Ze źródeł rumuńskich na kontynencie, Tajne, 30 stycznia 1943.

not exceed the limits, as J. Librach concluded, "which were apparently determined by the government".<sup>80</sup> Such a state of affairs was actually unchanged at the beginning of 1944, the difference being that Deputy Prime Minister M. Antonescu abandoned the Marshal's line in looking for secret contacts with the Allies, which, thanks to the means he was in charge of, gave quicker and more visible results than the opposition actions.

Abandoning the Romanian issues by the "Continental Action", forced by the British, was strengthened by the deposition of Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kowalewski from Lisbon. Such decision of the Polish government was imposed by the Foreign Office, which did not approve of Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kowalewski's unequivocal anti-Soviet attitude. However, various dissertations approved by the Continental Action proved that the Romanian issues remained the object of interest of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An example of which was a note "Iuliu Maniu and Wyshinski" from 19 December 1944, which contained the quintessence of Maniu's failed efforts to start some sort of relations with the Soviets, as well as a review of the political situation in Romania at the time. The facts quoted proved that the "Continental Action" still maintained contacts with politician inside and outside Romania.<sup>81</sup>

Judging the significance of the "Continental Action" today, it should be said that it was a way to maintain contact between Romania, being part of the axis coalition and the allies. It may be also added that for nearly three years the "Continental Action" was the most important means of such contact, fulfilling the function of a former and future ally. Also, the source of interest for Poland in the prewar ally should be mentioned, namely, the war priorities of the Polish foreign policy regarding the reconstruction of the Polish state in its prewar boundaries (at least); there was also an idea to establish a federation of states, guarantying to preserve peace in Central Europe, of which Romania was supposed to be an important part. The effort put into the "Continental Action" activity, even though Romania eventually left the axis coalition on different terms than those planned, was valuable because it made the Romanians realize their true position, and convinced them of the Allies' inevitable victory.

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<sup>80</sup> IPMS, A.9.VI. 17/7, Pro memoria...

<sup>81</sup> IPMS, PRM, 173/3, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. Akcja Kontynentalna, Tajne, Stambuł, 19 grudnia 1944.

# Reussites culturelles roumaines dans les années de La Seconde Guerre Mondiale

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**Abstract** - During the Second World War, when Romania was faced with a series of events and difficult situations, Romanian intellectuals have managed to bring their contribution to satisfying their spiritual needs through a number of valuable works, thus also contributing to the establishment of an ideology of resistance. Romanian intellectual resistance was varied, with an important role being played by culture personalities - culture had become a dynamic force embodying national and social realities.

**Keywords** - community, culture, intellectual resistance, national values, Second World War, solidarity.

**Rezumat: Reușite culturale românești în anii celui de-al doilea război mondial**

Al doilea război mondial a oferit multor intelectuali, oportunitatea de a-și transfera idealurile lor etice, promovate prin operele fiecăruia în parte, în realitățile politice de atunci. Activând în primul rând în slujba dezideratelor naționale, conștienți de vremurile dificile pe care le trăiau, realizările oamenilor de cultură din acei ani au constituit, ceea ce istoria a numit rezistența intelectuală. Era o altfel de rezistență decât cea armată, prin care nu de puține ori a fost atrasă atenția asupra pericolelor reprezentate de regimurile și ideologiile extremiste. Privind retrospectiv, pe lângă lucrările publicate, cea mai mare contribuție a intelectualității române în anii celui de-al doilea război mondial a fost una morală, prin crearea unui consens etic bazat pe principiul demnității umane. Cel mai serios eșec a fost, în anii care au urmat războiului, incapacitatea ei de a introduce valorile promovate în sfera politică, culturală și socială.

**Cuvinte cheie** : comunitate, cultură, rezistență intelectuală, valori naționale, al doilea război mondial, solidaritate

La seconde Guerre mondiale a offert à bon nombre d'intellectuels des pays impliqués, qui ont eu beaucoup à souffrir à cause des opérations militaires déroulés sur leur territoire, l'opportunité de transférer les idéaux éthiques promus à travers leurs œuvres aux réalités politiques du temps. Mis au service des desiderata nationaux et conscients des temps difficiles qu'ils



traversaient, les hommes de culture ont réalisé dans ces années-là ce que l'histoire appelle résistance intellectuelle, une résistance différente de celle armée, qui a à plusieurs reprises tiré la sonnette d'alarme quant aux dangers menaçants représentés par les régimes et les idéologies extrémistes.<sup>1</sup> Même si elle n'a pas réussi à se coaguler en un mouvement unitaire et bien que ses efforts et initiatives n'eussent pas été suffisamment appréciés, la résistance intellectuelle européenne a tenté d'offrir aux facteurs de décision du temps un modèle de société, dans laquelle les valeurs et les libertés peuvent coexister avec le respect de la dignité humaine.<sup>2</sup> Comme les hommes de culture étaient le plus souvent obligés de faire preuve de beaucoup de précaution dans leurs écrits, l'histoire les a parfois oubliés, puisqu'au moment des comptes elle se bornait à dénombrer les cadavres en uniformes ; il n'empêche que les intellectuels ont eu leur contribution à la victoire sur le nazisme et à la promotion de la solidarité entre les États du continent.<sup>3</sup>

Pour ce qui est des intellectuels roumains, ils ont réussi, à un moment où leur pays était confronté à des événements et des situations des plus difficiles, à satisfaire les besoins spirituels de la population par des ouvrages de valeur et contribuer ainsi à l'émergence d'une résistance nationale.

Les grands érudits du temps, tels que Nicolae Iorga, Mihail Ralea, D.D. Roșca, Tudor Vianu, Anton Dumitriu, George Călinescu, Gheorghe Brătianu, Lucian Blaga, Liviu Rebreanu, Tudor Arghezi, Mihail Sadoveanu, Victor Eftimiu, Ionel Teodoreanu, Ion Pillat, Ion Agârbiceanu, Camil Petrescu, P.P. Negulescu, Athanase Joja, Lothar Rădăceanu, Scarlat Callimachi, Alexandru Sahia et beaucoup d'autres, tout au long de cette période, ont été présents dans la conscience publique soit par des rééditions, soit par de nouvelles œuvres.

Nicolae Iorga, qui a tellement bien pris le pouls de la sensibilité nationale, à partir de la seconde moitié de la 4<sup>e</sup> décennie et jusqu'à sa mort, survenue à l'automne de 1940, a eu le courage de prêcher la résistance nationale, par son activité scientifique, culturelle et journalistique, ayant un apport décisif à la formation d'une idéologie de la résistance intellectuelle. Son exemple a par la suite été suivi par tous ceux qui ont intégré la résistance nationale dans la période 1941-1944.

Figure remarquable de la culture roumaine, George Călinescu – qui réunit en lui l'homme de plume de grande valeur et le professeur

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<sup>1</sup> Voir James D. Wilkinson, *The intellectual resistance in Europe*, Harvard University Press, 1981

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p.111.

<sup>3</sup> Voir Marcela Sălăgean, "Pentru o Europă Unită. Proiecte și atitudini în cadrul mișcării de rezistență intelectuală 1939-1945", în: *Repere ale dezvoltării la început de mileniu*, Târgu Mureș, Ed. Dimitrie Cantemir, 2004.

d'université d'une rare érudition –, immédiatement après le déclenchement de la guerre, a publié dans *România Literară*, dans le journal *Ecoul* et dans la revue *Vremea*, des articles dans lesquels il dénonçait les injustices de la guerre. Ensuite, en avril 1944, aux côtés d'autres représentants de la culture roumaine, Călinescu a signé le mémoire adressé à Ion Antonescu, par lequel ils réclamaient la sortie de la Roumanie de la guerre.<sup>4</sup> La plus importante des oeuvres que George Călinescu a rédigées dans les années de la guerre reste *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent* (Histoire de la littérature roumaine depuis les origines à nos jours). Comme Alexandru Piru le remarquait bien en 1945 dans la revue *Viața românească*, cet ouvrage constitue « la première analyse détaillée et complète du phénomène littéraire roumain depuis sa naissance à nos jours. Pour la réaliser, l'auteur a dû lutter non seulement avec l'abondance du matériau, souvent inaccessible, ingrat, éparpillé, mais aussi avec une certaine opinion créée autour de lui, vide mais tout aussi résistante».<sup>5</sup>

Tudor Vianu est l'écrivain qui dans *Introducere în teoria valorilor întemeiată pe observatia conștiinței* (Introduction à la théorie des valeurs fondée sur l'observation de la conscience) a développé une véritable conception de l'homme et de son idéal. Cet ouvrage, paru en 1942 à Bucarest aux éditions Cugetarea, constitue une recherche plutôt épistémologique qu'ontologique, dans laquelle l'auteur présente avec beaucoup de rigueur les actes qui nous permettent de saisir et comprendre les valeurs.<sup>6</sup>

D.D. Roșca, «un croyant fanatique, un partisan déclaré et un combattant téméraire pour la primauté de l'esprit et la table de valeurs éternelles»<sup>7</sup>, a incarné le credo de toute une génération d'intellectuels. Parmi les œuvres qu'il a publiées dans les années de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, nous mentionnons surtout *Valori veșnice* (Valeurs éternelles) (1941), *Despre unele puteri ale științei* (Sur certains pouvoirs de la science) (1942), *Puncte de sprijin* (Points d'appui) (1943) – où il a réuni des études et des essais rédigés entre 1940 et 1943, dont les idées, les sentiments et les attitudes exprimaient en fait l'opinion de l'Université de Cluj-Sibiu, qui a d'ailleurs pris en charge les frais de publication de ce volume –, *Rezistențe și limpezimi* (Résistances et éclaircissements)(1945).

Le philosophe et logicien Anton Dumitriu a édité, en 1943, un intéressant ouvrage de philosophie et d'histoire de la culture, qu'il a intitulé de manière significative, *Orient și Occident* (Orient et Occident). C'est un

<sup>4</sup> George Călinescu, *Texte social-politice 1944-1946*, București, Ed. Politică, 1991, p.5.

<sup>5</sup> *Viața Românească*, an XXXVII, nr.3-4, martie-aprilie 1945, București, pp.186-187.

<sup>6</sup> *Saeculum. Revistă de filosofie*, an I, nr.1, ianuarie-februarie 1945, Sibiu, p.105.

<sup>7</sup> *Viața românească*, nr.cit., p.189.

livre dédié à l'homme et qui envisage l'avenir de l'humanité avec optimisme. En approchant la problématique de la condition humaine, de la civilisation et de la culture, Anton Dumitriu s'est proposé de faire une analyse attentive de la position de l'homme dans le monde, des rapports généraux entre la culture et les perspectives qui s'ouvraient devant l'humanité après la guerre. Selon lui, la recherche doit approfondir, informer, faire preuve de probité intellectuelle, mais aussi de courage, l'ouvrage d'Anton Dumitriu pouvant être considéré comme un livre d'anticipation et d'intérêt pour la structure de l'Europe de l'après-guerre. L'auteur a réussi à saisir le caractère complémentaire des deux zones de culture, occidentale et orientale, sans toutefois essayer de réaliser une conciliation hybride, élective entre les deux. Ces deux zones de la réalité ont d'ailleurs une structure et un aspect différents. Si l'Orient est statique, traditionnel, figé, l'Occident tire sa sève de l'affirmation des valeurs personnelles de la pensée.<sup>8</sup> La publication de ce livre pendant la guerre, dans une période d'insécurité et de transformations profondes, peut être considérée comme une préfiguration de la structure intellectuelle de la future Europe ; c'est un ouvrage optimiste, pouvant servir de guide vers un avenir capable d'instaurer les valeurs humaines universellement valables.

Le grand historien, professeur et homme politique Gheorghe I. Brătianu a eu, pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, sa part de contribution au développement du patrimoine culturel. Dès les premiers jours de l'an 1940, il a publié *O enigmă și un miracol istoric, poporul român* (Une énigme et un miracle historique, le peuple roumain), ouvrage de référence dans l'historiographie roumaine du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Par cet ouvrage, l'auteur a souhaité rectifier et compléter les affirmations de l'historien français Ferdinand Lot, professeur à la Sorbonne, qui avait publié une synthèse sur les invasions barbares et avait consacré un chapitre à la question de l'origine et de la formation du peuple roumain. Vladimir Dumitrescu remarquait dans la revue *Convorbiri literare* que «le livre de Monsieur Brătianu, qui regorge d'événements, de constatations et d'interprétations parfois tout à fait inédites et personnelles, a le mérite non seulement de synthétiser, à la portée de tout intellectuel, les données les plus importantes sur la question de l'origine du peuple roumain, mais aussi la grande qualité d'avoir conservé un esprit de totale objectivité dans l'estimation des arguments et de parfaite urbanité dans l'affirmation des opinions».<sup>9</sup>

D'autres ouvrages publiés par Gheorghe I. Brătianu pendant la guerre ont été *Acțiunea politică și militară a României în 1919 în lumina*

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, an XXXVI, decembrie 1944, p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> *Convorbiri literare*, an LXXII, nr.1, ianuarie 1940, București, p. 82.

*corespondenței diplomatice a lui I.I.C. Brătianu* (L'Action politique et militaire de la Roumanie en 1919 à la lumière de la correspondance diplomatique de I.I.C. Brătianu), qui dévoile des aspects intéressants et inédits sur l'activité de Ionel Brătianu à la Conférence de Paix de Paris en 1919 ; *Roumanie et Hongrie. Considérations démographiques et économiques*, où l'auteur part du principe que toute revendication territoriale doit tenir compte non seulement des droits historiques mais aussi des éléments vivants d'un État : la configuration démographique et la situation économique ; *La question roumaine en 1940*, qui évoque la situation de la Roumanie après l'occupation de la Bessarabie et du Nord de la Bucovine par l'Union soviétique, la cession du Nord de la Transylvanie à la Hongrie et du Quadrilatère à la Bulgarie ; *La Moldavie et ses frontières historiques* est une synthèse de l'histoire de la Moldavie depuis la nuit des temps à nos jours, qui met en évidence les principaux moments qui ont marqué le changement des frontières de ce pays, avec toutes les conséquences politiques et sociales ayant découlé de ces événements-là.<sup>10</sup>

Constantin Rădulescu Motru, dans son ouvrage *Etnicul românesc. Continuitate de origine, limbă și destin* (Ethnicité roumaine. Continuité d'origine, de langue et de destinée), paru en 1942 à Bucarest, a essayé d'expliquer le nouvel esprit du temps en accord avec sa propre conception philosophique, en mettant l'accent sur l'élément ethnique et la spécificité nationale.<sup>11</sup> Une année plus tard, Mircea Eliade allait publier aux éditions Publicom *Comentarii la legenda meșterului Manole* (Commentaires à la légende du maître artisan Manole), œuvre d'intérêt à la fois pour la philosophie, la littérature et l'ethnologie, dans laquelle l'auteur formule quelques objections à la thèse selon laquelle, pour durer, toute construction doit être animée, autrement-dit son auteur doit la douer d'une âme humaine ou animale.<sup>12</sup>

C'est toujours dans les années de la guerre que virent le jour *Oamenii Măriei Sale* (Les hommes du prince-régnant), dernier volume de la trilogie *Frații Jderi* (Les Frères Jder) de Mihail Sadoveanu ; *Istoria filozofiei contemporane* (L'Histoire de la Philosophie contemporaine) de P.P. Negulescu ; *Renaștere și Reformă* (Renaissance et Réforme) de Andrei Oțetea ; *Trilogia cunoașterii* (La Trilogie de la connaissance) de Lucian Blaga etc. Ce sont autant de preuves des réalisations d'exception de la spiritualité roumaine, obtenues en dépit des problèmes auxquels elle devait faire face.

Les pertes territoriales subies en été 1940 ont constitué un autre thème d'intérêt pour la plupart des auteurs. Toutes les revues et les

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, an LXXIV, nr.2, februarie 1941, București, pp. 254-257.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, an LXXVI, nr.2, februarie 1943, p. 154.

<sup>12</sup> *Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, an X, nr.9, septembrie 1943, București, p. 633.

journaux de culture parus sur le territoire du pays pendant la Seconde Guerre ont inclus dans leurs pages des articles dédiés à la Bessarabie, à la Bucovine et surtout à la Transylvanie, mais aussi des poésies, des romans, de petites pièces de théâtre, des comptes-rendus, des chroniques de livres etc.

Parallèlement aux œuvres publiées et aux articles de presse, l'enseignement a eu une contribution essentielle à la promotion de la culture. Dès l'école primaire, ensuite dans les écoles secondaires et les universités, les enseignants ont cherché à « modeler » leurs élèves en accord avec les valeurs nationales des jeunes générations. L'Université de Cluj, réfugiée à Sibiu après l'arbitrage de Vienne du mois d'août 1940, s'est trouvée à la tête de ces manifestations.<sup>13</sup>

Outre les œuvres des érudits des territoires libres, le patrimoine culturel national s'est enrichi dans les années de la Seconde Guerre mondiale avec les ouvrages de quelques auteurs de Transylvanie, de Bessarabie et de Bucovine, dont la plupart se virent obligés de quitter leurs lieux nats pour s'établir sur le territoire libre, où ils continuèrent leur activité.

Les intellectuels transylvains, par exemple, qui ont cherché refuge dans le Vieux Royaume ont protesté contre la décision de Vienne du 30 août 1940 sous des formes spécifiques, telles que la publication dans la presse du temps d'une série d'articles sur ce thème ou bien la fondation du journal *Ardealul*, placé sous la direction d'Anton Ionel Mureșan. Par l'intermédiaire de cette publication, les intellectuels transylvains réfugiés ont réussi à faire connaître aussi bien les réalités de leur province d'origine que leurs propres peines. *Ardealul* a ainsi publié les poésies de plusieurs poètes transylvains, contemporains ou non avec les événements (Andrei Mureșanu, Octavian Goga, George Coșbuc, Iustin Ilieșu etc.), des médaillons dédiés à des personnalités de l'histoire et la culture roumaine, et a marqué, par une série d'articles, les événements les plus importants de l'histoire de la Roumanie. Il y a aussi des pages consacrées aux coutumes et aux traditions populaires transylvaines, liées principalement aux moments essentiels de la vie, qui ont été présentés en détail.

Le 14 septembre 1940, donc deux semaines après l'arbitrage de Vienne, quelques intellectuels du territoire transylvain cédé ont créé la Communauté nationale des Roumains du Nord de la Transylvanie.<sup>14</sup> Sous la direction d'Emil Hațieganu, véritable apôtre des idéaux nationaux, cette organisation a déroulé une activité intense de promotion des valeurs culturelles nationales. La presse a été dans ces temps-là non seulement le

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<sup>13</sup> *Istoria Universității "Babeș-Bolyai"*, (coord. Ovidiu Ghitta), Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Mega, 2012, pp. 127-184.

<sup>14</sup> Mihail E. Ionescu, *Puterea cuvântului*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 1994, p. 226-227.

principal moyen de diffusion de la culture au sein de la population mais aussi l'une des formes les plus significatives de manifestation de l'identité ethnique et culturelle. En dépit des conditions difficiles (manque de ressources financières et matériels, présence de la censure etc.) les intellectuels transylvains du territoire occupé ont réussi à fonder trois journaux de grand impact sur les Roumains de cette province : *Tribuna Ardealului* (la publication officielle de la Communauté nationale des Roumains du Nord de la Transylvanie), *Viața ilustrată* (paru à Sibiu et ensuite à Cluj) et *Săptămâna* (publié à Bistrița, sous l'égide des dirigeants de la communauté des régiments de gardes-frontières de Năsăud).<sup>15</sup>

La « résistance » des hommes de culture a continué après la guerre, même si les progrès enregistrés étaient ombrés de ce qu'ils n'avaient pas réussi à accomplir. Le véritable péché de la restauration avait été d'avoir ignoré, pendant les premières années de paix, les possibilités créatives, qui ont commencé peu à peu à disparaître. Déçue par la restauration, mais consciente de sa force, l'intellectualité a continué à critiquer certains traits de la société de l'après-guerre. Sa situation était cependant assez ingrate : elle se faisait entendre, mais personne n'y prêtait une oreille attentive.<sup>16</sup>

Dans ces conditions, tout ce qui restait à faire, c'était de conserver la mémoire d'une expérience unique, la communauté. La lutte pour la liberté et l'indépendance des pays tombés sous l'occupation nazie a, d'une part, accentué le sentiment national et, de l'autre, développé une solidarité européenne rarement rencontrée, manifeste dans la pensée d'un grand nombre d'hommes de culture du continent.<sup>17</sup>

Les intellectuels roumains, sans déclencher des actions retentissantes, ne sont pas restés indifférents au mouvement pour l'unité européenne qui traversait le continent dans les années de la guerre. Dans son numéro de février 1940, *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* publiait un compte-rendu au livre *Amica mea Europa* (Mon amie l'Europe), où l'on précisait que plus les Roumains seraient Roumains, plus ils seraient Européens. Dimitrie Gherasiu, dans son article « Spațiul european » (L'Espace européen), paru dans le numéro 5 de 1941, soutenait que toutes les grandes guerres de l'histoire ont abouti à la création d'un nouvel ordre mondial, et que le futur

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<sup>15</sup> Voir Marcela Sălăgean, "Inițiative ale intelectualității românești din Nordul Transilvaniei 1940-1944", în: Valentin Orga, coord, *Arbitrajul de la Viena între documentele de arhivă și memoria colectivă*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Argonaut, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Voir Idem, "Rezistența intelectuală europeană 1939-1945. Câteva considerații", în: *Societate și civilizație. Profesorului universitar dr. Marcel Știrban la împlinirea a șapte decenii de viață*, Tg. Mureș, Ed. Dimitrie Cantemir, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Idem, "Pentru o Europă Unită. Proiecte și atitudini în cadrul mișcării de rezistență intelectuală 1939-1945", în loc. cit..., pp. 87-88.

ordre européen devrait faire échapper le continent au chaos. En octobre 1944, la même revue publiait un article qui s'intitulait « Un plan de federalizare a Europei Centrale » (Un projet de fédéralisation de l'Europe centrale).<sup>18</sup>

En guise de conclusions, outre les ouvrages publiés, la plus grande réalisation de l'intellectualité roumaine pendant les années de la Seconde Guerre mondiale a été la création d'un consensus éthique fondé sur le principe de la dignité humaine. Son échec le plus important dans les années de l'après-guerre a été l'incapacité d'appliquer les valeurs promues dans les sphères politique, culturelle et sociale.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem.*

# The beginnings of Collectivization in Romania<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** In this article I propose to reconstruct the main developments taking place in the collectivization of the Romanian agriculture. Focusing on year 1949 the present study relies on edited and unedited sources from Romanian and foreign archives, strongly aiming at illustrating the main legislative and socio-economic mechanisms put in place by the communist regime in an effort to enforce the collectivization of the Romanian agriculture.

**Keywords:** communism, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, collectivization of agriculture, repression

**Rezumat: Începuturile colectivizării în România.** Pe parcursul acestui articol ne propunem să reconstituim într-o manieră factuală și procesuală principalele evoluții survenite în colectivizarea agriculturii din România. Cantonat asupra anului 1949, prezentul studiu se bazează pe documente inedite și editate din arhivele românești și străine, încercând să ilustreze principalele mecanisme legislative și socio-economice utilizate de regimul comunist în impunerea colectivizării agriculturii în România.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** comunism, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, colectivizarea agriculturii, represiune

In the first months of 1949 were issued two legislative acts of major importance for the subsequent transformations experienced by the Romanian countryside in general and by agriculture in particular.

The first one, Law no. 1 published in the *Monitorul Oficial (Official Journal)* of January 1, 1949, stipulated in chapter 2 the political and economic objectives set for the upcoming year. It is worth noting the objective concerning the Romanian agriculture: "preparing and implementing measures to guide this sector onto the path of Socialism, especially by providing appropriate equipment like machines and tools, by reinforcing the state farms and the machine and tractor stations and by creating and expanding different types of co-operatives".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Monitorul Oficial* (hereafter *MO*), No. 1 of January 1, 1949, p. 4A.



The second legislative act was Decree No. 83 which “completed the provisions laid down in Law No. 187/1945” published in the *Buletinul Oficial (Official Bulletin)* of the Romanian People’s Republic (RPR) of March 2, 1949.<sup>3</sup> A synthetic analysis of Law No. 187 of March 23, 1945 for the carrying out the agricultural reform<sup>4</sup> reveals that following the adoption of this law 1 468 000 hectares of land were expropriated,<sup>5</sup> land ownership among the peasants was reduced to no more than 5 hectares,<sup>6</sup> and not in the least, it led to the fragmentation of peasant property over land and the “abolition” of landed properties exceeding 50 hectares.<sup>7</sup> Decree No. 83/1949 has been considered a preliminary stage of the process of agricultural collectivization launched at the Plenary of March 3-5, 1949<sup>8</sup>. Article 2 of the decree stipulated: „The State will gain ownership of the following goods which thus become property of the people: a) the agricultural estates of the landowners expropriated on the grounds of Law No. 187/1945 and the model farms set up on the grounds of the same law with their entire livestock, equipment and constructions owned by or assigned to these estates, independent of their location; b) the agricultural and semi-industrial installations, the goods and materials used in agricultural exploitation, all farm produce stored for sale and owned by the expropriated landlords; c) all debts, bonds, interests and due rights resulting from the activities taking place on the expropriated land.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See: *Buletinul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române* (hereafter *BO*), No. 1 of March 2, 1949, pp. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> The scope of this law was written down in chapter I, article 1: “The agrarian reform is a national, economic and social necessity for our country. The Romanian agriculture will rely on strong, healthy and productive farms, on privately owned farms.” See: *MO*, No. 68bis, March 23, 1945, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Costin Murgescu, *Reforma agrară din 1945*, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1956, p. 157.

<sup>6</sup> Gheorghe Iancu, „Aspecte din procesul colectivizării agriculturii în România (1949-1960)”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „George Bariț” din Cluj-Napoca*, tom. XL, 2001, p. 207.

<sup>7</sup> Gheorghe Iancu, Virgiliu Țărău, Ottmar Trașcă, *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Aspecte legislative 1945-1962*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000, p. XIII; for a more detailed outlook on Law No. 187 of March 1945, see: Dumitru Șandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945 în România*, București, Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000, pp. 116-309.

<sup>8</sup> Viorel Ciubotă, “Câteva aspecte inedite privind regimul confiscărilor de bunuri ale elitei sătmărene în anul 1949”, în *Sovietizarea Nord-Vestului României (1944-1950)*, Satu Mare, Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 1996, p. 241.

<sup>9</sup> Article 3 also stipulated that the provisions of the decree did not cover: “personal and household objects owned by the expropriated landlords” or “by their acolytes and their families, nor the food stored in warehouses for personal consumption, as instructed by the Ministry of Agriculture”. See: *BO*, No. 1, March 2, 1949, p. 2.

It is notable that seizure of “landowners’ property” was launched during the night of March 2, 1949, before the law was even brought to the attention of the peasants. The “police-like” measures enforced by the communists made any form of opposition impossible.<sup>10</sup> The land expropriation was brutal, the landowners being evacuated from their houses with only a few belongings and chased away from the counties in the middle of the night.<sup>11</sup> Some landowners were arrested and imprisoned, while those who escaped detention were coerced by the Militia into accepting forced residence in areas where many of them could not supply means of subsistence.<sup>12</sup>

In line with the same actions initiated by the communist regime in the Romanian countryside in the first months of 1949 was organized the Plenary of March 3-5, which drafted “the exact schedule of the socialist transformation of agriculture”.<sup>13</sup> According to the communist regime, the socialist transformation of agriculture required that “the working class find support in the poor peasantry, build alliance with the middle peasantry and fight relentlessly against the kulaks.”<sup>14</sup>

At first, the Plenary decided that once the technical conditions were put in place and the peasants persuaded, a small number of collective agricultural farms would be set up in order “to show to the poor and middle peasants what a collective farm is and what benefits this form of cooperation brings for agricultural production.”<sup>15</sup>

As we may understand from what has been stated so far, the Romanian rural life was divided by the communist authorities into poor peasants, middle peasants and kulaks<sup>16</sup>, thus entailing an artificial antagonism meticulously put in place by the communist regime. According to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in March 1949 the need was to contain the

<sup>10</sup> Dumitru Șandru, “Decretul 83/1949”, in *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, Year I, No. 1/1993, p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> For a more extended outlook on Decree No. 83 of March 1949 and its repercussions on the population, see: Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, *Stalinizarea României. Republica Populară Română: 1948-1950: transformări instituționale*, București, BIC ALL, 2005, pp. 484-504.

<sup>12</sup> Dumitru Șandru, “Decretul 83/1949”, p. 141.

<sup>13</sup> National Central Historical Archives (hereafter, ANIC), Central Committee (CC) of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) Fund – Agrarian Section, dos. 12/1960, vol. I, f. 72.

<sup>14</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Agrarian Section, dos. 45/1952, f. 3.

<sup>15</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Agrarian Section, dos. 12/1960, vol. I, f. 72-73.

<sup>16</sup> According to the 1948 census, the agricultural proletariat represented 2.5%, the poor peasantry 57%, the middle peasantry 34%, and the kulaks 5.5% of the country’s population. On this topic, see: Nicolae Giosan, Bucur Șchiopu, David Davidescu (coord.), *Agricultura României 1944-1964*, București, Editura Agro-Silvică, 1964, p. 36.

kulaks, not to liquidate them.<sup>17</sup> Yet, the Romanian leader pointed out: “Although this containment policy towards the kulaks is not intended to abolish them as a class, it will keep them from gaining economic power, limit the exploitation of the working peasantry and allow us to declare – when everything is place – the complete annulment of land ownership by the kulaks”.<sup>18</sup>

The collectivization of agriculture implemented in the Romanian villages starting with 1949 was based on the Stalinist principle of class struggle which was going to set off a double mechanism: first, it would allure the poor and middle peasantry, and second, it would alienate the peasants labeled as kulaks and exploiters by the communist regime.<sup>19</sup> The so-called kulaks were in fact wealthy peasants, stigmatized by the regime in order to justify its objective of collectivization of the agriculture.<sup>20</sup>

It is worth noting how Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej proposed to make a distinction between the kulaks and the rest of the peasants: „Without doubt, the area of land owned by a peasant farm is an important element in establishing to which category he belongs. But this is not and cannot be the only criterion taken into account. In order to separate the worker in agriculture – the poor and the middle peasantry – from a kulak several aspects must be considered: Does he own land? In which region is the land? Does he own means of production, and if yes, how many and what type? What type of crops does he grow? How much does he produce and what proportion of this production is marketed? Does he use external workforce? Is he exploited by others? How large is the family? And several local specificities which we can assess only on a case by case basis. However, the critical factors taken into account are whether he exploits external workforce

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<sup>17</sup> Dan Cătănuș, Octavian Roske, *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Dimensiunea politică*, Vol. I, 1949-1953, București, Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> See: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Sarcinile Partidului Muncitoresc Român în lupta pentru întărirea alianței clasei muncitoare cu țărâimea muncitoare și pentru transformarea socialistă a agriculturii. Raport la ședința plenară a CC al PMR din 3-5 martie 1949*, București, Editura pentru Literatură Politică, 1953, pp.49-50.

<sup>19</sup> Eugen Negrici, “Rolul literaturii în campania de colectivizare”, in Dorin Dobrinu, Constantin Iordachi (editors), *Țărâimea și puterea. Procesul de colectivizare a agriculturii în România (1949-1962)*, Iași, Polirom, 2005, p. 163.

<sup>20</sup> See: Dorin Dobrinu, “Colectivizarea agriculturii și represiunea împotriva țărânimii din România (1949-1962)”, in Ruxandra Cesereanu (coord.), *Comunism și Represiune în România: istoria tematică a unui fratricid național*, Iași, Polirom, 2006, p. 113; Katherine Verdery, “Chiaburii vechi și noi: închiaburirea și deschiaburirea țăranilor din Aurel Vlaicu”, in Dorin Dobrinu, Constantin Iordachi (editors), *op. cit.*, p. 350

or he is exploited by others, whether he owns means of production, how many and what kind.”<sup>21</sup>

After issuing the Resolution of the March 1949 Plenary, the communist authorities chose a small number of villages in which, according to archive sources, “the working peasants were showing interest in the issues raised by the party in the working papers of the plenary”.<sup>22</sup> Hence, in June 1949 these villages were visited by several activists of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers’ Party and of the Ministry of Agriculture in order to disseminate the model-statute of a collective agricultural farm and to “guide” the peasants into setting up the first collective farms in their villages.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, the entire propaganda apparatus was mobilized in this direction, as confirmed by the work plan proposals for June 15 – August 31, 1949, which stated that particular attention would be paid to the propaganda around setting up the first collective agricultural farms (CAF).<sup>24</sup>

The first CAFs were established in Romania on July 24, 1949. These were: *Zorile* (Turnișor – Sibiu), *Drumul Nou* (Zăbrani – Arad), *Ogorul Roșu* (Laslea – Târnava Mare), *Victoria Socialismului* (Rășcani – Vaslui) and *Tractorul Roșu* (Luna de Jos – Cluj).<sup>25</sup> Archive records note the way in which the communist regime saw the conception of the first CAFs: „Setting up the first collective agricultural farms is very important for the construction of socialism in our country. They symbolize a beginning which opens up the transition from the primitive, unprofitable and misery causing individual farm to the large collective farm based on advanced technique and the latest scientific discoveries yielding welfare and culture among the working peasants”.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Sarcinile Partidului Muncitoresc Român în lupta pentru întărirea alianței clasei muncitoare cu țărănimea muncitoare și pentru transformarea socialistă a agriculturii. Raport la ședința plenară a CC al PMR din 3-5 martie 1949*, pp. 28-29; for a more detailed outlook on the criteria of differentiation between the kulaks and the other peasants, see: Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, “Categorია socială a «chiaburului» în concepția P.M.R. din anii ‘50”, in *Analele Sighet*, Vol. 8, 2000, pp.284-298.

<sup>22</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Agrarian Section, dos. 12/1960, vol. I, f.76.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Propaganda and Agitation, dos. 3/1949, ff. 52-53.

<sup>25</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Agrarian Section, dos. 12/1960, vol. I, ff. 73, 76; Ottmar Trașcă, “Aspecte privind primii ani ai colectivizării agriculturii în România, 1949-1952. Studiu de caz: regiunea Cluj”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „George Bariț” din Cluj-Napoca*, tom. XLIV, 2005, p. 389.

<sup>26</sup> The same documents noted: “The consolidation and prosperity of the collective agricultural farms intended to become forceful nuclei for alluring the working peasantry on the path to socialism is a fundamental task of our Party.” See: ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Propaganda and Agitation, dos. 98/1949, f. 1.

If in July 1949 only a few collective agricultural farms had been set up, by the end of that year 56 such units were recorded throughout the country.<sup>27</sup> The 56 CAFs counted 4 327 individual peasant farms covering a total of 15,026.76 hectares of land.<sup>28</sup> Statistic records show that more than half of the people registered in the collective agricultural farms set up in 1949 were poor peasants and peasants who did not own any land. From a total of 4,327 farms which formed the 56 CAFs, 2,832 were poor peasants farms, 101 gathered peasants who did not own land and 1,394 farms were middle peasants farms.<sup>29</sup>

According to the 1949 model-statute, the kulaks were not allowed to join the collective agricultural farms. In this respect article 10 of the CAF model-statute stipulated: "Can acquire membership of the collective agricultural farm working peasants of any sex and nationality, and all handymen who did not lose their political and civil rights and are at least 18 years old. Kulaks and speculators, namely people who exploit external workforce, are banned from joining the farm."<sup>30</sup>

It is worth mentioning the number of livestock owned by all the 56 CAFs, as results from statistic records drafted by the communist authorities: 1,006 horses (18 horses on an average for each CAF), 784 oxen (14 oxen on an average for each CAF) and 334 cows (6 cows on an average for each CAF).<sup>31</sup>

The Party members' attitude towards joining the collective agricultural farm is reflected also in statistics found in archive records. Out of the 7,277 Party members from the 55 communes which hosted the 56 CAFs set up in 1949, only roughly a quarter (2,304 members) were registered in the CAFs.<sup>32</sup>

How "well received" by the peasants were the actions of the communist authorities aiming for the socialist transformation of agriculture and the setting up of collective agricultural farms in the Romanian villages results from a report of the *Biroul de Securitate* (Bureau of *Securitate*) from Roșiori de Vede addressed to the *Serviciul Județean de Securitate Teleorman* (Teleorman County *Securitate* Service) on October 6, 1949. It was stated, for instance, that on October 6 in the collective agricultural farm from Răteasca "two comrades from the Party and the president of the provisional

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<sup>27</sup> Open Society Archives, 300 RFE/RL Research Institute, 60 Romanian Unit, 1 Subject Files (hereafter, HU OSA 300-60-1), *Rumanian Peasantry's Resistance to Collectivization Camouflaged by Official Figures*, 5 March 1958, Box 30, unpagged.

<sup>28</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Agrarian Section, dos. 66/1950, f. 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Agrarian Section, dos. 16/1949, f. 5.

<sup>31</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Agrarian Section, dos. 66/1950, f. 31.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 31-32.

committee of the *plasă*<sup>33</sup> were hit by the villagers who became angry because the three comrades had come to meet the people in charge of land fusion".<sup>34</sup> It seems that the villagers' action was well organized as some countrymen were "patrolling in gangs through the village", while others gathered at the collective farm threatening to set it on fire during the night. The report also stressed that the *Miliția* were called to secure the armed guard of the farm.<sup>35</sup>

A debriefing for October 31 - November 12, 1949 of the *Direcția Securității Capitalei* (The *Securitate* Directorate of the Capital) recorded that at "Drumul lui Lenin" collective agricultural farm from commune Livedea-Ilfov several members expressed their intention of withdrawing from the CAF and moving to other communes, which created an "atmosphere of discontent".<sup>36</sup> The report also noted that one CAF member, F.B., sold his cattle while other peasants were "scolded" by their wives for registering in the CAF. Moreover, the report pointed out: "The opposition of the CAF members' wives influences the peasants who thus want to withdraw from the association or sell their cattle now that the farm stable is almost finished."<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, the Romanian countryside was experiencing extremely difficult times because the rural co-operatives received insufficient supplies of goods essential for the peasants.<sup>38</sup> A debriefing dating December 1949 of the *Direcția Securității Capitalei* (The *Securitate* Directorate of the Capital) noted that the poor and the middle peasants were dissatisfied because the supply of goods to the co-operatives around the winter holidays was "scarce" and they were missing lamp oil, matches and cigarettes.<sup>39</sup> The discontent of the Romanian peasants was recorded also in a debriefing of the *Biroul de Securitate* (Bureau of *Securitate*) from Roșiori de Vede: "The poor and the middle peasants object to the fact that the village co-operatives sell packed cotton only in exchange for cereals and they end up paying in cash only 1/3 of the actual cost of the cotton. They say that this decision should apply to the people who own cereals, not to those who have to buy cereals to feed themselves".<sup>40</sup> The same *Biroul de Securitate* (Bureau of

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<sup>33</sup> Administrative-territorial unit consisting of several communes, inferior to the county.

<sup>34</sup> Archive of the National Council for the Study of *Securitate* Archives (hereafter, ACNSAS), Documentary Fund, dos. D 000193/1949-1950, f. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, in the end the report stated: "Until now, we don't know the names of those who opposed, protested and hit the three comrades".

<sup>36</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 12064/1949, f. 71.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 71-72.

<sup>38</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 000193/1949-1950, f. 29.

<sup>39</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 12064/1949, f. 7.

<sup>40</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 000193/1949-1950, f. 29.

*Securitate*) reported the “state of mind of the peasants” , highlighted some of their claims: “The peasants are unhappy that they cannot buy as much wood material as they need. The Roșiori warehouse gets crowded and not everybody can buy. The peasants complain that they cannot find young cattle for reproduction. The cattle brought by Comcar were insufficient. The villagers resent that the co-operatives do not provide fats. They say that fats are sent to Bucharest and the villagers experience serious shortage. Also, the linen distributed in the villages doesn’t satisfy their needs.”<sup>41</sup>

Another problem reported by peasants in 1949 and recorded by the archives refers to the preferential sharing of the scarce goods found in the co-operatives. For instance, in commune Chiroiu from Ilfov County the textiles were split between the wealthy villagers and the relatives of the management. The same situation was in commune Măriuța, where the president, the cashier and the shop assistant of the co-operative shared the fabrics with friends and relatives, which lead to serious protests of the poor peasants. In the same commune, the co-operative refused to sell salt to a poor woman, but after she left, the shop assistant, the cashier, the president of the co-operative and kulak N.S.G. each took home 10 kilos of salt.<sup>42</sup>

Another case of preferential division of goods was reported at the co-operative from Maia-Ilfov controlled by two brothers. Here the textiles were split among the wealthy villagers because, they argued, “the poor don’t have money and the co-operative assets cannot remain blocked.”<sup>43</sup> As such, in December 1949, when the county authorities distributed fabrics for the poor peasants’ children, these were not sold to them, which prevented the peasants from sending their children to school because they lacked clothing.<sup>44</sup>

Life in the Romanian countryside was changed indefinitely from the moment the collectivization of agriculture was launched. The system of quotas forced the peasants to contribute large amounts of goods, making it impossible sometimes to observe the quotas enforced. Article 1 of Decree No. 306 “for the collection of cereals” of July 1949 read: “The Council of Ministers, based on the proposals of the State Commission for collections sets the quotas of cereals due by the different categories of agricultural

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<sup>41</sup> The same report noted that in the communes Cucuieți and Dobrotești, a few poor and middle peasants gave food supplies to the “former landlords and expropriated kulaks” as they returned home for one or two days. This situation created “a state of compassion” towards them. Consequently, certain measures were called for, so that the expropriated landowners would not return to their homes. (*Ibidem*, f. 21).

<sup>42</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 000008/1949-1950, vol.1, f. 62

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*.

farms depending on their economic situation". Furthermore, it was mentioned that the quotas were progressive depending on "the total area of arable land owned by the farm and the region's average production of crops per hectare".<sup>45</sup> Article 1 of Decision No. 774 of the Council of Ministers published in *Buletinul Oficial (Official Bulletin)* of the RPR of July 21, 1949, approved the plan for the collection of wheat, rye, oats and barley from the 1949 harvest drafted by the State Commission for collections. The decision also stipulated that failing to hand in the quotas, the tithe levied on threshing and grinding, as well as any other infringement of its provisions were in violation of Decree No. 183/1949<sup>46</sup> and were punishable by 1 to 2 years correctional jail and a fine between 10.000 and 100.000 lei.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Article 3 specified furthermore: "The general plan for the collection of cereal amounts corresponding to the settled quotas will be drafted by the State Commission for cereal collection and approved by decision of the Council of Ministers. The general collection plan will stipulate the amount of cereals that has to be obtained from quotas and the threshing tithe in each county, taking into account: the county's average production per hectare, the area of arable land in the county, the structure of the agricultural farms in the county." According to article 4, after the general plan was drafted, "in each county, based on the amounts of goods established by the State Commission for the collection of cereals, will be drafted: a) the county collection plan by the provisional county committee; b) the collection plan for each *plasă* by the provisional committee of the *plasă*; c) the collection plan for each commune, including agricultural farms, by the provisional commune committee". However, the most important thing was mentioned at article 5: "Based on the collection plans drafted by the provisional committees, each producer of crops will receive before the threshing a record of the amounts that he must hand in for every type of cereals recorded in the collection plan of that agricultural farm." See: *BO*, No. 47 of July 21, 1949, pp. 3-4.

<sup>46</sup> Decree No. 183 was an essential instrument in the hands of the local authorities, allowing them to exercise extreme pressure on the peasants. According to article 2 of this decree, 1 to 12 years correctional jail and a 10.000 to 100.000 lei fine were enforced upon those who: "a) disrespected the decisions of the Council of Ministers, ministries and local state authorities concerning the execution of the State Plan, as well as the decisions regarding the lead, the organization and the control of production, circulation, distribution and consumption of goods and products of any sort, which are not stipulated in the State Plan (...)" 6 month up to 6 years correctional jail and a 4.000 to 100.000 lei fine (article 3) were foreseen, among other acts, for: "(...) b) instigating price increase by any means (...) e) selling or handing in goods and produce whose manufacturing and quality are different from what has been declared (...)" Also, article 4 stipulated very clearly that were punished by 5 to 15 years hard labor and a 50.000 to 200.000 lei fine the following acts: "d) concealing, destroying or falsifying the produce". See: *BO*, No. 25 of April 30, 1949, p. 2; Octavian Roske, "Accente în strategia colectivizării. Articolul 209 Cod penal", in *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, Year II, no. 1-2/1994, p. 277.

<sup>47</sup> *BO*, No. 47 of July 21, 1949, pp. 4-5; see also: Octavian Roske, "Colectivizarea și mecanismul colectărilor: istorii paralele", in Dorin Dobrinu, Constantin Iordachi (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 120-122; Gheorghe Iancu, Virgiliu Țărău, Ottmar Trașcă, *op. cit.*, pp. XXII-XXIV;



Along with the various legislative regulations concerning quotas, their enforcement by the communist authorities in the Romanian villages was done mostly “machine-like” without taking into account the realities on the ground. Often the average production of crops per hectare was presumed higher and many communes were mistakenly included in categories of high productiveness. For instance, in commune Gârla Mare, Mehedinți County, the authorities did not take into consideration that most of the 1949 harvest was compromised by the draught. Instead they settled the average production per hectare “in relation to the average yield of a good year”.<sup>48</sup> Also, in commune Malovăț, located in a steep region with sandy land, the authorities who set the quotas considered the same productivity per hectare as in the Danube Plain.<sup>49</sup>

In the same spirit, a report of *Direcția Securității Capitalei* (The Security Directorate of the Capital) noted that in Ilfov County, the threshing campaign started around August 9, 1949, mobilizing the threshers owned by the kulaks, those of the machine and tractor stations, as well as those of the collective agricultural farms. Yet, the number of threshers was insufficient and most of the communes started the harvest only after the threshers finished threshing elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> It is worth noting that before the threshing campaign, the provisional committees recorded in writing the average crop production per hectare at 900 kilos of cereals. Since the real harvest in Ilfov County in 1949 was of approximately 400-450 kilos per hectare, many peasants were forced to hand in to the state their entire harvest, while some of them remained “indebted” to the Collection Commission. The same report noted that “this situation was generalized across Ilfov County and, for this reason, at one point the peasants refused to show up for threshing” leading the administrative organs, “following superior orders”, to rewrite the harvest records.<sup>51</sup>

After handing in the entire quotas enforced upon them many peasants were left with a very small amount of cereals and, in some cases, with nothing from the yearly harvest. Hence, some peasants had to buy the cereals they owed to the state and hand them in to complete the quotas. In this respect, a debriefing of the Agitation Sector referring to shortages recorded in the collection campaign read: “For instance, in Teleorman

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Sanda Borșa, Mihai Croitor, *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România: mecanismele legislative ale subordonării lumii rurale (1949-1962)*, Cluj-Napoca, Mega, 2009, pp. 48-50.

<sup>48</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund – Propaganda and Agitation, dos. 3/1949, ff. 54, 180.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 54.

<sup>50</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 12064/1949, f. 169.

<sup>51</sup> The report specified that the peasants who had been deprived of a larger amount of cereals were handed back that amount after the rewriting of the records. (*Ibidem*, ff. 171-172).

County, plasa Roșiori and plasa Alexandria, communes Butucule (sic!), Drăgănești, Silești, Râca and others, many poor and middle peasants were deprived of all wheat after submitting the quotas. Many of them had to buy the grains in order to complete the compulsory quota. A middle peasant from commune Butculești, plasa Roșiori, Teleorman County, after threshing the wheat he realized that he missed the quota by 95 kilos. He informed the authorities about his situation, and after four days of postponements and misery, waiting day and night in the cart by the field, the authorized agent forced him to carry the harvested wheat to the collection centre and to buy, on his own expenses, the remaining 95 kilos and thus hand in the entire quota he was obliged to."<sup>52</sup>

The situation was unchanged as regards corn and potatoes. A monthly debriefing drafted by *Biroul de Securitate* Căciulați (Bureau of *Securitate* from Căciulați) on December 28, 1949, in the category "Complaints and commentaries" stated that the peasants were unhappy with the attitude of the authorities enforcing the quotas because, they said, "they could not know the real situation of corn crops from the distance of an office", collecting grains from peasants who could hardly afford to "get through the winter".<sup>53</sup> In commune Brezoaia, Ilfov County, at the end of December 1949 the collection of potatoes was still under way because the peasants were protesting against the quotas set too high in contrast with the actual production. Consequently, the peasants submitted only 50% of their quotas and filed a complaint for the rest of the amount. Under these circumstances, the representative of the collection centre (*Comcereal*) refused to pay the peasants for the potatoes delivered unless they agreed to submit the entire quantity.<sup>54</sup>

Because the collection plan had to be observed at all costs, in many cases the communist authorities resorted, on the one hand, to imposing higher quotas on the middle peasants, and on the other hand, to registering middle peasants as kulaks and imposing higher quotas on them.<sup>55</sup> The way in which the communist regime understood the role of the peasants labeled

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<sup>52</sup> The debriefing also mentioned that in Dolj County, communes Pielești, Cornu, Plenița and others, the situation was so desperate that more than half of the poor and middle peasants were left without wheat for sowing. See: ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Propaganda and Agitation, dos. 3/1949, f. 180. See also: Octavian Roske „Radiografia unui eșec. Colectivizarea agriculturii în România”, in Ruxandra Ivan (coordinator), „Transformarea socialistă”: politici ale regimului comunist între ideologie și administrație, Polirom, Iași, 2009, p.100.

<sup>53</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 000008/1949-1950, vol.1, f. 93.

<sup>54</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 12064/1949, ff. 6-7.

<sup>55</sup> ANIC, CC of the RCP Fund - Propaganda and Agitation, dos. 3/1949, f. 54.

as kulaks in the process of quota collection is described synthetically in the following excerpt from a report of the *Direcția Securității Capitalei* (The *Securitate* Directorate of the Capital) dating September 7, 1949: "The administrative organs in general acted in support of class struggle so that the threshing commissions would satisfy the needs of the poor and the middle peasants by enforcing heavy quotas on the kulaks".<sup>56</sup>

Paying off quotas would often lead to situations in which the peasants could not provide for them and their families. For this reason the kulaks resorted to methods intended to elude the constraints imposed by the regime. The abovementioned report of *Direcția Securității Capitalei* (The *Securitate* Directorate of the Capital) names some of these methods: "Kulak elements have searched by any means possible to avoid collection. The kulaks from commune Afumați refused to show up for threshing claiming that they had not finished work in the fields. They also used a method consisting of shaking the wheat sheaves on the way to the collection centre and steal the fallen grains. (...) Concealing wheat and other cereals is among the most frequent acts of sabotage perpetrated by the kulaks. For instance two kulaks M.H.H. and M.T.C. from commune Vărăști hid the amount of stolen wheat in their homes and thus were accused of sabotage. Kulak M.I. from commune Varteju instigated the poor peasant I.M. from the same locality to thresh his wheat on his behalf knowing that the quotas enforced on poor peasants are smaller. In this case the culpable is charged with acts of sabotage".<sup>57</sup>

In conclusion, starting with 1949 the Romanian countryside experienced a brutal metamorphosis once the measures taken by the communist regime in favor of the socialist transformation of agriculture were put in place.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> ACNSAS, Documentary Fund, dos. D 12064/1949, f. 173.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 177.

<sup>58</sup> We mention the fact that this article is a part of a broader research project entitled: "Between Propaganda and Repression: the Collectivization of the Romanian Agriculture and the Metamorphoses of the Rural World (1949-1962)"

# The Danube at the Iron Gates. Histories of the Romanian-Serbian Border in the 20th Century<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** This article discusses four types of historical representations dealing with a specific geographical area, i.e. the Romanian-Serbian border at the Iron Gates gorges on the Danube. According to what was at the stake in relation to the Danube at certain moments, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, there are international, regional, national and last, but not least, the micro-historical approaches. Most of these pluralistic perspectives about the Danube are however, missing to portray the image of the main object of study: the Danube itself with its people. Thus, the article pleads for micro-historical approaches which would complete and assign to this region the place among the most interesting and relevant borderland communities in Europe.

**Keywords:** borderland, border, oral history, discourse, narrative, Danube, Romania, Serbia/Yugoslavia.

**Rezumat. Dunărea la Porțile de Fier. Istorii ale graniței româno-sârbe în secolul al XX-lea.** Acest articol aduce în discuție patru tipuri de reprezentare istorică ale unei zone geografice specifice, respective granița româno-sârbă din zona Porților de Fier ale Dunării. În funcție de miza pe care a avut-o problema Dunării în diferite momente de-a lungul istoriei și în special în secolele al XIX-lea și al XX-lea, abordările au fost la nivel internațional, regional, național și, nu în ultimul rând, abordări de micro-istorie. Cele mai multe dintre aceste perspective pluraliste asupra Dunării conțin prea puțin referințe la imaginea propriu-zisă a Dunării și a oamenilor care trăiesc pe malurile sale. Articolul de față susține că, prin intermediul abordărilor de micro-istorie imaginea Dunării poate deveni una completă iar această regiune poate dobândi un loc printre cele mai interesante zone de frontieră din Europa.

**Cuvinte cheie:** zonă de frontieră, graniță, istorie orală, discurs, narațiune, Dunăre, România, Serbia/Iugoslavia.

When thinking about the Danube, most people have a visual representation, often aesthetically associated with the blue colour from Strauss's musical description of the river. Although the Danube is a consistent place of reference for Europe's past, the vast amount of historical

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discourses on this topic leave the river, and especially its people, out. In its own history, the Danube is missing. It was presented either as an interest, an idea, an asset, or a problem, but even when authors allow a small glimpse of the river, they fail to acknowledge the people living on its borders. As if narrowing down the length and increasing the perspective, the sector under scrutiny in this article, the Iron Gates<sup>2</sup> area and its people were metonymically left out of most historical studies, with few notable exceptions. Such an exception is the book by Claudio Magris which is an amazing description of the river from its spring in the Black Forest to the end in the Black Sea.<sup>3</sup> This book, an excellent literary narrative of a downstream travel, with exotic deviation such as a travel in Transylvania, Belgrade or Bucharest, offers a succession of historical short stories of (mostly, but not only) famous people taking place in towns and villages on the river banks. Magris pays particular attention to the border and provides an entire subchapter for the so-called "Grenzer," legendary soldiers who protected the Austro-Hungarian frontiers,<sup>4</sup> but again the Iron Gates, in spite of their spectacular landscape, remains outside.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this article is thus to present and analyse the written representations of the Iron Gates section of the Romanian-Serbian border and the way in which these histories are slowly, but constantly, shifting from discourse to narrative in the 20th century.<sup>6</sup>

Much history has been written about the Danube, more is still untold, and other accounts already forgotten. The classical distinction between a historical fact and the writing about that fact created a dichotomy exploited by Hayden White who challenged the entire historical thinking when contesting the very existence of a historical fact outside the written – or spoken – narrative. One could apply this perspective to the way the Danube is claimed to have played an important role in the becoming of the Romanian nation-state, without even representing the river itself in

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<sup>2</sup> The name Iron Gates refers in this article exclusively to the Danube gorges and not to the homonym electric plant build at about 25 km downstream from the gorges. Other names used in the area are "The Danube's Cauldrons" for the Iron Gates canyon, or "The Danube's Clisura" which includes the entire region along the Danube from Moldova Veche to Drobeta Turnu Severin.

<sup>3</sup> Claudio Magris, *Danubius*, Bucharest, Univers, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 330-332.

<sup>5</sup> There are two pages dedicated to this area and they focus on the Iron Gates electric plant. *Ibidem*, pp. 338-339.

<sup>6</sup> This theoretical perspective emerged during a discussion with professor Doru Radosav. The fundamental distinction between discourse and narrative, as is used in this article, is that, although both are representations of the past, the first has an instrumental function, being a purpose-oriented creation which is meant to influence a specific public, while the narrative is rather protean, with an aesthetic function.

historical writings. That the Danube is a common place of memory for the whole Romanian nation is a funding truth and does not need further examination. However, when looking at what have been said about the Danube, one can observe that relevant investigations on the Romanian-Serbian fluvial frontier remain, similar to its very geographical position, at the periphery of historians' interest. One of the recent trends in historical research deals with borderland communities in different areas of the world.<sup>7</sup> In this context, studying the Iron Gates area and its historiography can provide useful insights on a complex borderland.

Why are the Iron Gates particularly salient for research about the Danube? First, because it was this particular part of the river that has received the most attention by politicians, geographers, jurists, and historians since the dawn of history. Another peculiarity is that even though for many centuries it was the natural frontier between different powers, it was rarely presented as a limitation or separation, the focus being on its strategic position and the difficulties of navigation as the area was full of cataracts and rocks. The passage of the vessels at the Iron Gates was a problem that necessitated special trained and experienced pilots to navigate up and downstream in the zone. The problem was so serious that needed to be solved by the dominant powers at different historical moments.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, only after the creation of the Iron Gates dam in the 1970s<sup>9</sup> the navigation eventually became easy. The building of the dam generated a

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<sup>7</sup> For example, the University of Zagreb initiated the *Triplex Confinium* International Research Project in 1996. Another example is *The Cold War in Communicative Memories and Public Spheres. Ten Case Studies in Border Communities* carried out by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Vienna in 2006 which included a case study from the Romania-Hungarian border communities. Another example of the interest the borderland topic receive in the last decades is a European Commission funded project, *ClioRes* (2005-2010) which devoted a taskforce to the study of European frontiers, publishing five volumes on this topic.

<sup>8</sup> In 1899, Hungary finished digging a navigation channel of 2840 m on the right border of the Danube at the Iron Gates gorges. The navigation problems were only partially sold.

<sup>9</sup> According to a document issued by the Radio Free Europe the discussions between Romania and Yugoslavia on the building of the electrical plant on the Danube started in 1953, that is before the 1955 meeting between Iosip Broz Tito and Nikita Khrushchev which marked the reconciliation between the maverick and the USSR. In 1956 during his short visit in Romania Iosip Broz Tito agreed, and in June 12, 1963, a bilateral agreement was signed. The construction begun in 1964 and was concluded in 1972. The Romanian town of Orșova and Donij Milanovac on the Serbian border, as well as many other villages on both sides were flooded. *Yugoslav-Rumanian Relations: Tito and Ceaușescu Resist Moscow's Hegemony*, Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary, (further HU OSA) 300-8-3:78-4-336, Research, Communist Area, Yugo/0260, Foreign Yugoslavian relations, July 2, 1969.

raise in river's level which covered all the cataracts and the rocks, making navigation unproblematic. However, this construction brought one of the most invasive and traumatic physical changes to the Danube, generating the flooding of the entire inhabited area from the Ada Kaleh Island to the Moldova Veche, while people had to relocate to higher grounds and construct new homes.

Four types of historical representations of the Iron Gates area are easily identifiable, most of them emerging according to what was at stake regarding the Danube in specific historical moments. They range from international to regional, national and micro-historical perspectives, according to the (ab)uses of the Danube by different paradigm setters. There is not a chronological development of these approaches but rather a concentric structure from the wider to the narrower, with micro-historical insights that can be found in three other types of history.

The first type of history that enters the scene of modern and contemporary historiography is a representational result of the political international interest on the Danube. This history emerged in the context of the liberalization of the navigation waterway, focusing on the judicial regime of the river from the Vienna Congress in 1815 to today.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting, however, that it was not historians, but rather law specialists who were attracted to this topic, due to the fact that its judicial system was a hybrid solution between international public law and national law.

Most such works portray the Danube as an abstract object of study for international relations and analyse the ways in which it was instrumented according to various geopolitical interests of the great European powers.<sup>11</sup> The discourses on the liberalization of the navigation on the Danube can continuously be found in the historiography throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup>

When geopolitically speaking about the Danube, the perspective is so wide that the details became blurry and the Danube remains a simple line on

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<sup>10</sup> Such an example is the book by Paul Gogeanu, *Dunărea în Relațiile Internaționale*, București, Ed. Politică, 1970.

<sup>11</sup> In the interwar period there was a boom of preoccupations on the judicial regime of the Danube. See, for example, the works by David Hunter Miller, "The International Regime of Ports, Waterways and Railways", *The American Journal of International Law*, 4 (October, 1919), pp. 669-686; Gordon E. Sherman, "The International Organization of the Danube Under the Peace Treaties", *The American Journal of International Law*, 3 (July 1923), pp. 438-459; J. P. Chamberlain, "The Regime of the International Rivers: Danube and Rhine," *Studies in Political Science*, Columbia University, no. 1 (1923); Henri Hajnal, *Le Droit du Danube International*, Hague, 1929.

<sup>12</sup> Josef L. Kunz, "The Danube Regime and the Belgrade Conference," *The American Journal of International Law*, 1 (January, 1949), pp. 104-113.

a map. According to this standpoint, the reader can glimpse only the most dangerous section of the navigable waterway, the Iron Gates which needed to be improved upon and opened to everyone's use. Successive international encounters of the Great Powers in 1856, 1878, 1921, and 1948 established the Danube regime and created the institutions to manage the navigation on the river, such as the European Commission of the Danube<sup>13</sup> and the later distinction between the European and International Commissions of the Danube,<sup>14</sup> and finally the Danube Commission with their respective administrations.<sup>15</sup> These institutions issued documents about their activity on the Iron Gates area which offered a more dynamic image of this region and its people, but no systematic research had yet been conducted.<sup>16</sup> More recently, the focus of the scholars in international relations shifted towards trying to integrate this area in the wider world politics, although they were not very convincing.<sup>17</sup> During the post-World War II period, the Danube had geopolitical importance for the Soviet Union who succeeded to eliminate both Austria and West Germany from the Danube international organizations.<sup>18</sup> Obviously, these two countries were the only exceptions to a communist Danube as Austria and West Germany were considered among the few connections with the Western world for the countries in the soviet sphere. Therefore, the discussions about the geopolitical role of the Danube were integrated into the Cold War discursive approach.

The political interest on the Danube was, thus, focused on the navigation which connected different worlds and generated an image of a trans-national macro-reality. The historiographical modern interest for the Danube generated a specification of the representations of the Danube that has remained constant since. The Danube had an exclusively alongside presentation, flowing downstream, but never a cross-river perspective. The

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<sup>13</sup> Edward Krehbiel, "The European Commission of the Danube: An Experiment in International Administration," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (March, 1918), pp. 38-55.

<sup>14</sup> Ruth E. Bacon, "Representation in the International Commission of the Danube," *The American Journal of International Law*, 3 (July, 1937), pp. 414-430.

<sup>15</sup> On August 18, 1948, the Belgrade convention stated the creation of a Danube Commission with two different administrations: the Special Fluvial Administration of the Lower Danube, with its headquarters in Galați and the one of the Iron Gates with headquarters in Orșova and Tekija, with the exclusive participation of the two riparian countries. Paul Gogeanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-265.

<sup>16</sup> Such interesting documents have been published in a collection by Tudor Rățoi, *Regimul Dunării la Porțile de Fier și Cataracte (1891-1924)*, vol. I, Craiova, Ed. Alma, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the book by Ciprian Beniamin Benea, *Dunărea: geopolitică și negociere. Studiu de caz*, Iași, Ed. Institutului European, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> See William Zimmerman, "Foundation Hierarchical Regional Systems and the Politics of System Boundaries," *International Organization*, 1 (Winter, 1972), pp. 18-36.



20<sup>th</sup> century historical discourses about the international regime of navigation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century used most of the available ink. These are the master discourses still considered to be the canon in writing about the Danube.

The second type of history of the Danube emerged as result of the role that was played – or expected to be played – by the Danube at a regional level. The viewpoint is similar to the previous one, differing only by zooming in on a geographically more restrained area, and with a focus on ideas rather than on macro-realities. One of the dominating issues in this type of history was related to the specific interest that powers such as Austrian monarchy, Germany, Italy or, later, the Soviet Union, had in the Danube area.<sup>19</sup> It is mainly about the federalization projects of the Danube area, such as the Polish ones with Adam Czartoryski or the different versions of "Intermarium" which encompassed the whole Central European area between the Baltic and the Mediterranean. Others envisaged the organization of a more restricted region, such as the Balkans (Balkan Federation, Balkan Communist Federation, Tito-Dimitrov plan) or concentrated on Central Europe or Danube Europe, especially the proposals of Nicolae Bălcescu and Lajos Kossuth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century federation project of Milan Hodža, prime minister of the first Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>20</sup> Several schemes wanted to maintain the Habsburg Empire, but aimed at its internal reorganization and modernization, such as the plans of the Karl Renner and Oszkár Jászi. Quite a few of them wanted to begin with the union of two peoples or states as a nucleus for a broader federation to be built up in several steps. Kossuth wanted to start from Hungarian-Romanian cooperation, Eduard Benes from a Czechoslovak-Polish union, and the Tito-Dimitrov plan was to be developed from a Yugoslav-Bulgarian basis. Some projects set out for the immediate establishment of a very high form of cooperation while others wanted to begin with even closer economic relations and then proceed towards higher stages, ending in a federation or confederation.<sup>21</sup>

All of these federalization projects were based on the idea of shared values and on the hope that either there is a common Danube identity among the peoples living along the river, or that a common identity can be created. The Danube was seen as a connection asset rather than a frontier, but given the fact that most of these projects never materialised, they offer

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<sup>19</sup>A presentation of all these projects can be found in Antonin Basch, *The Danube Basin and the German Economic Sphere*, New York, 1943.

<sup>20</sup> For other Danube cooperation projects during the Cold War see Charles Andras, *Neighbours on the Danube, New Variations on the Old Theme of Regional Cooperation*, HU OSA 300-8-3:97-2-24, Radio Free Europe, Research East-West Relations, December 1967.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

an exclusive optimistic, romantic and peaceful perspective. In the interwar period, the Danube was also mentioned in the context of the regional alliance system.<sup>22</sup> After the fall of communism, the European Union initiated borderland projects, some of them involving the Serbian-Romanian frontier of the Danube.<sup>23</sup>

The third type of representation is the one related to what was at stake at a national level in what concerns the Danube.<sup>24</sup> While the first two types of histories transcended the national boundaries, this one would presumably get us closer to the river as a frontier because it should bring the physical frontier setting into the picture.<sup>25</sup> Following the Paris conference after World War I, the border between Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats was set both on land and on the Danube.<sup>26</sup> Still, the focus is on the land frontier which had raised more discussions than the Danube one, the former being again left out. There are authors who see the expression of nationalism in controlling the river in the Danube politics promoted by the Romanian government after 1918.<sup>27</sup> In the context of the negotiation for the Danube Convention of 1921, Nicolae Titulescu argued that, "Romania considers that it is necessary to bring an end to the European Danube Commission because it represents an unbelievable anachronism, and an unacceptable control of foreigners on the ancestors' soil."<sup>28</sup> The lobby of the Romanian authorities against the international administration of the Danube needs to take into account that the internationalization of the navigation on the Danube took away the possibility for Romania to express total sovereignty on the river.<sup>29</sup> The effort that the newly created Romania put into the creation of a regional security system is a sign that they were

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<sup>22</sup> Philip Marshall Brown, "The Little Entente", *The American Journal of International Law*, 1 (January, 1921), pp. 67-68.

<sup>23</sup> See Markus Perkmann, "Cross-Border Regions in Europe: Significance and Drivers of Regional Cross-Border Co-Operation," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 10/2003, available online at <http://eur.sagepub.com/content/10/2/153>, accessed 25.10.2010.

<sup>24</sup> Richard C. Frucht, *Dunărea Noastră: Romania, the Great Powers, and the Danube Question, 1914-1921*, Colorado, 1982.

<sup>25</sup> Pavel Brebu, *Frontiera României cu R.S.F. Iugoslavia*, Timișoara, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> This border today measures 546,4 km, of which 256,8 km are on land and 289,6 km on river. Of this length, the Iron Gates region has around 70 km, from the village of Svinița till Drobeta Turnu Severin.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Nicolae Dașcovici, *Dunărea noastră*, Bucharest, 1936.

<sup>28</sup> Nicolae Titulescu apud Gogeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

<sup>29</sup> In the international public law, the state sovereignty manifests only on territorial maritime waters, while the Danube regime states that the navigation on the Danube is internationalised and the riparian states have only limited rights and duties incumbent to the facilitation of navigation in their respective waterway sections. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 675.

projecting the prestige of a stable and powerful country outside the physical boundaries of the state.

In the contemporary Romanian society, the bilateral relations between Romania and the Kingdom of Serbian, Slovenes and Croats/ Yugoslavia were – and still are – mythically perceived as positive throughout history. There is a locus of memory where the official discourse and the narrative intermingle. An excellent analysis of the Romanian-Yugoslav relations in the second half of the 20th century was provided by Laura Herța whose approach in on International Relations theory. Laura Herța's perspective is that, with the exception of the 1948-1954 period, Romanian-Yugoslav relations evolved from normalization (1955-1960), to good neighbourhood (1960-1964) and to friendship (1964-1970).<sup>30</sup> There was a positive perception of the *Other* across the border which continued to be the canon in spite of the fact that, at the end of World War II, there was a lot of troubles on the border.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the communist fraternity strengthen the mythical nexus between Romania and Yugoslavia. Tito's denunciation of 1948 and his expulsion of Cominform, and the association of the new Popular Republic of Romania with the anti-Tito campaign launched by the Soviet Union, is presented as an exception to the good long-term relations.<sup>32</sup> A document issued by Radio Free Europe in 1975 confirms this official perspective: "With the exception of the period from 1949 to 1956, when the Soviet bloc countries had implemented a political and economic boycott against Yugoslavia, relations between Yugoslavia and Romania have gradually but consistently improved and broadened, and recently reached a high level of friendly co-operation in several areas of activity."<sup>33</sup>

The positive trend of the official Romanian – Yugoslav relations fissured in the 1990s when the embargo against Yugoslavia was proclaimed

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<sup>30</sup> Laura Herța, *Romanian-Yugoslav Relations from 1950 to 1970*, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, doctoral dissertation (unpublished).

<sup>31</sup> According to a series of documents published by Miodrag Milin, after the World War II, "the protection of the frontier was fiction," and there were shared fears for a possible occupation of the Banat region by the Serbian partisans. The focus of his approach was the Danube border downstream of Moldova Veche, where in January 1945, some Tito's partisans organised local partisan groups within the Serbian community in this area. "With some delay, [February 1945], the Serbian activities propagated in the much more isolated villages of the Danube Clisura." Miodrag Milin, Andrei Milin, *Sârbi din România și relațiile româno-iugoslave*, Varsac, 2004, pp.45-51.

<sup>32</sup> This positive perception is valid for the other side, too, a Yugoslav diplomat claiming that "we do not forget that the Romanians were the lasts to sign the 1948 declaration." Benea, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>33</sup> Zdenko Antic, *Productive Results of Yugoslav-Rumanian Cooperation*, at HU OSA 300-8-3:115-3-56, Background Report/76, Yugoslavia, 25 April 1975, p. 6.

by the United Nations. However, at the level of the borderland communities the trans-border relations increased. A totally new and antonymic connotation of the word “embargo” emerged: the breaking of the proper embargo by smuggling gas into Serbia and, according to some local people whom I have interviewed, all kind of other goods, from pianos to horses and sheeps. Though a money making machine for riparian and leaders of smuggling networks, the embargo was often described by local people as a means of helping the good Serbian neighbours, thus placing the myth of good Romanian-Serbian relations in a folklore perspective. With the exception of the media coverage of this phenomenon, the embargo vanished away as a straw fire, and slowly entered into oblivion. Most articles make reference as well to the land border between Romania and Serbia, while the spectacular Danube crossing with all kinds of vessels under the tacit approval of the border guards remained underrepresented.<sup>34</sup> The public opinion in Romania seemed to be against the decision made by the politicians to allow the NATO - at the time, Romania was not a NATO member - to use the Romanian airspace in order to bomb Belgrade in May 1999. Many oral testimonies mention that, they “heard the bombing and even saw the flames in Belgrade.”<sup>35</sup> Moreover, among the Serbian community along the Romanian side of the Danube a strong pro-Milosevic attitude emerged, especially after his sending to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. People would not speak about the ethnic cleansing carried out by Milosevic, but only about his “tragic” faith in the “hands of that tribunal.”<sup>36</sup>

Slowly, we now get a more detailed picture from the magnifying lenses of the core micro-historical approaches to the Romanian-Serbian border on the Danube. It deals, among other things, with elements of popular memory such as, for example, a well-known saying that throughout the entire history, Romanians had only two good neighbours: the Serbians and the Black Sea. Implying that the relations with all the other neighbours were at least problematic, this perspective could be related to what Smaranda Vultur calls the myth of “the good Banat people.”<sup>37</sup>

Micro-historical approaches can challenge the traditional perception of a frontier as a space of separation, a caesura between territories and

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<sup>34</sup> Radu Pavel Gheo, “O tradiție în pericol: șpaga la vamă”, *Revista 22*, (June 8, 2007); Id., (June 4, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> F.S. interview by the author, audio recording, Orșova, August 13, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>37</sup> Smaranda Vultur, “The Image of a Good European”, in François Ruegg, Rudolf Poledna, Călin Rus (Eds.), *Interculturalism and Discrimination in Romania Policies, Practices, Identities and Representations*, Berlin, 2006, pp. 309 – 313.

peoples. Micro-historical narratives for the communist era provide a rather conflicting perspective on this issue, but it is worth mentioning that, for the first time, the Danube-as-border is visible. On one hand, there is the official discourse of the perfect closure of the borders provided by the communist authorities. Oral testimonies of border guards express the frustration of being forced to “defend” the frontier against its own citizens, “by having the weapons turned to the inside.”<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, for the people living on the border, the river played the part of a merger between the former Yugoslavia and Romania, and indirectly between Romania and the West. Furthermore, the political rigidity of the Bucharest authorities regarding the isolation of Romania seems to have been stopped before the frontier line was established because the privileged locals possessed a special permit which allowed them to cross the Danube for small business. The embargo gas smuggling of the 1990s can be placed in the continuity of this border-crossing tradition.

In fact, the Danube and especially the Iron Gates area was, during the communist regime, one of the most frequented spaces for the illegal crossing<sup>39</sup> of those who were seeking freedom in the West. Those people have been remembered by the collective memory as the frontier trespassers (so-called “frontieriști”) and populate all of the accounts about the past of the border communities.<sup>40</sup> Such fascinating narratives can be found only in

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<sup>38</sup> A.B. interview by the author, audio recording, Orșova, August 16, 2010.

<sup>39</sup> About the so-called frontieriști, *The Final Report* published by the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, Bucharest (2006) refers only to aspects regarding the criminal law applied against all those who trespassed the frontier. Brândușa Armanca, *Istoria recentă în mass-media. Frontieriștii*, (2009) approaches the frontier from the perspective of a journalist. The book is based on research done in 2000 for a documentary called *Li se spunea frontieriștii*, by Dan Rațiu. Another book was published by Doina Magheți and Johann Steiner, *Mormintele tac. Relatări de la cea mai sângeroasă graniță a Europei*, Iași, Polirom, 2009 providing testimonies of those who tried to illegally leave the country through Yugoslavia.

<sup>40</sup> During the communist period, the people who illegally crossed the border were considered criminals. After 1989 and the fall of communism, they became heroes, as they have been portrayed in the mass-media. To give only several examples of articles published after 1989 one can find representative the ones by Marina Constantinoiu, “Pentru mulți dintre “frontieriști” viața s-a încheiat în Dunăre,” *Jurnalul National*, 1 (June 1, 2005); Id., “Cauza morții: libertatea. Biletsprelibertate.Pierdut.IIdeclarnul” *Jurnalul National*, (June 13, 2005); Id., “Cauza morții: libertatea. Un adevăr nebăgat în seamă. Dunărea, acest “Zid al Berlinului” pentru români,” *Jurnalul National*, (June 5, 2008); William Totok, “Fenomenul frontierist” - un capitol uitat din istoria comunismului românesc, *Deutsche Welle*, (March 16, 2009); Ovidiu Mărăscu, “Biblia frontieriștilor”, *Ziua de Vest*, (August 11, 2010); Ioan T. Morar, “Cazul ciudat și de neînțeles al poetului Damian Ureche, devenit frontierist,” *Academia Cațavencu*, (August 19, 2009); Vasile Surcel,

oral history interviews about the Iron Gates. The frontier trespassers were either envied for the success of escaping from the communist bloc or admired for their courage in taking the risk of failing if they were caught by the communist border guards. However, this polarized perspective does not exclude the accounts of those who succeeded to cross the Danube, although some were arbitrarily sent back by the Serbs. If this is the general perception, at the ground level of the history-that-does-not-yet-exist, people of the area, even though positive toward their neighbours, did seem a little bit puzzled by the fact that although Yugoslavia was a way to freedom, still no one could understand why the Yugoslavs would sometimes send people back who had escaped from Romania. This is a real, visible black mark in the paradisiacal relation between the two countries.

Between 1951 and 1956, the Serbian community on the Romanian border along the Iron Gates faced the trauma of collective deportation of people living on the border to Yugoslavia, "in order to create an ideal protection strip against Tito's disobedience and even more so against the Occident."<sup>41</sup> This event generated several preoccupations by scholars to find out the life-stories told by the deportees, their relatives, or members of the community. Again, we get only the experience of those who lived on the land border, while the Iron Gates area was scarcely looked at. One explanation given by Miodrag Milin is that this is due to the isolation of Serbian communities in the area, an element of continuity in the history of the region. However, these approaches bring the narrative into the scene of historical players.

In conclusion, the Romanian-Serbian border at the Danube Iron Gates gorges has been missing from its own history for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the recent historical developments, however, this area started to receive more attention. Still, there is much to be done, such as a complex micro-historical approach that could be similar to Gheorghe Brătianu's work on the Black Sea, but by reconstructing the history based on the experiences of people on the Romanian side of the Danube. It is important to see the differences and similarities between the events which form the hegemonic historical discourse on this area and the way in which the

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"Metamorfoză: Un grănicer s-a preschimbat în frontierist," *Jurnalul Național*, (May 29, 2009); Mira Bălan, "Cazanele morții - Visul zdrobit pe mal," *Jurnalul Național*, (June 12, 2005); Romanița Constantinescu, *Pași pe graniță. Studii despre imaginarul românesc al frontierei*, Iași, 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Miodrag Milin, Liubomir Stepanov, *Sârbii din România în golgota Bărăganului*, Timișoara, 2003, p. 3. See as well the project by Smaranda Vultur, *Memoria Banatului*, and the interviews available at <http://www.memoriabanatului.ro/index.php?page=surse-memoriale&type=interviews>, accessed 10.09.2010.

individuals are recalling and synthesizing the events of their past, this way, creating another story, as the historian Alessandro Portelli asserts. This is the crossroad between the international, regional and national echoed events and the individual oral narratives about these events. It spans from the "great history" of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the ways in which local people have experienced and lived during this time, but even more so to the way in which they remember this period. All of this history is yet to be written: what are the elements that characterize the way of life at the border during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the relationship with the authorities, the contacts across Danube, identifying places of memory at the borders, the memory on frontier trespassers during the communist period, the relationship between these frontier trespassers and the local communities and/or the border guards, the awareness of the local communities from the border about their presence, differences/similarities about the frontier memory in the urban and rural areas or between the way in which men and women remember the past. Last but not least, other issues that belongs to the un-told history of the region are the relationship between the centre and the periphery, and the divergences in the ways of relating to the Danube before and after the Iron Gates dam construction, as a major event in the history of that area which lead to radical changes in landscape and housing in the area.

# Communist Nostalgia in Romania<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** My paper analyzes the Romanian communist nostalgia within the general framework of the country's post-communist transition. This will be done in order to demonstrate that communist nostalgia is mainly the result of the profound transformations that the transition period brought into the lives of the people. Thus, it has little to do with the Romanians' supposed wishes of reviving the communism or with their lack of support for the liberal democracy. In this respect, I will show how the communist past moved from the status of the most loathed experience in the national history to the one that triggered Romanians' nostalgic feelings. The second part of my paper analyzes the commoditization of nostalgia for the communist past using the case of the advertising industry while the last one examines the results of opinion polls in order to highlight the nature of this nostalgia and also the sociological profile of a Romanian nostalgic.

**Keywords:** nostalgia, post-communism, Romania, Ceaușescu, transition, opinion polls

**Rezumat: Nostalgia comunistă în România.** Lucrarea analizează nostalgia românilor după perioada comunistă cu scopul de a demonstra că această nostalgie este rezultatul transformărilor profunde pe care perioada tranziției le-a generat în viața populației. În consecință, prin analiza mea demonstrez că nostalgia încercată de o parte a românilor nu este legată de dorința lor de a reînvia comunismului și nici nu este rezultatul atașamentului lor discutabil față de modelul democrației liberale. În lucrarea mea arăt cum și în ce condiții trecutul comunist a trecut de la statutul unei perioade detestate din istoria contemporană a țării la una care a devenit obiectul sentimentelor nostalgice ale românilor. Cea de a doua parte a lucrării analizează comodificarea nostalgiei comuniste de către industria românească de publicitate. În acest sens, am analizat trei reclame ale unor produse, care au avut propria lor istorie în perioada comunistă (mașina *Dacia*, ciocolata *Rom* și băutura *Pepsi Cola*) pentru a arăta cum realizatorii lor au folosit nostalgia pentru promovarea lor. Ultima parte analizează rezultatele sondajelor de opinie despre perioada comunistă realizate după Decembrie 1989. În acest sens, am arătat ce aspecte ale trecutului comunist au primit evaluări pozitive din partea românilor, cum arată profilul sociologic al nostalgicului și am pus în evidență apariția unei nostalgii secundare după trecutul comunist în rândul tinerilor români.

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**Cuvinte cheie:** nostalgie comunistă, memorie, publicitate, Nicolae Ceaușescu, sondaje de opinie.

## Introduction

After more than 20 years since the collapse of the communist regimes in Europe, the nostalgia for the communist recent past continues to spread in the former countries of the Soviet bloc. Both foreign and native observers explained its emergence as being the result of a romanticized remembering of the socialist past and also of overlooking the dictatorial nature of the former communist states. In addition, they also expressed concerns regarding the threat that nostalgia posed to the consolidation of democracy and its values in post-communist countries today.

Far from being a symptom of people's sentimental relation to the communist past or of their questionable embrace of the liberal democracy, the emergence of this "red" nostalgia is mainly the consequence of specific changes that post-communist transition generated in the European countries of the former Soviet bloc. Moreover, nostalgia implies a selective remembering and assessment of the past in its everyday occurrence which either underlines or overlooks certain aspects of what life was like during the good old days. Therefore, to denounce people's nostalgic relation with the recent past as a sign of their problematic engagement with the democratic project is a highly politicized perspective. It not only ignores the nature of remembrance of nostalgia but also devalues it on the argument that the past remembered is related to the population's daily existence during the communist period<sup>2</sup>.

## Nostalgia, Communist Nostalgia-Theoretical Background

Nostalgia is usually defined as a feeling of "longing for past times, people, objects, feelings, events, relationship no longer exists". According to

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<sup>2</sup> Joachim Ekman, "Communist nostalgia and the consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 3, September 2005, pp. 354-377; Breda Luther, Maruša Pušnik, "Introduction", in Breda Luther, Maruša Pušnik (eds.), *Remembering the Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Washington, New Academia Publishing, 2010, pp. 17-21; Silke Arnold-de Simine, Susannah Radstone, "The GDR and the Memory Debate" and Patricia Hogwood, "Selective Memory: Channeling the Past in the Post-GDR Society" in Ann Saunders, Debbie Pinfold (eds.), *Remembering and Rethinking the GDR. Multiple Perspectives and Plural Authenticities*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Cristine Polzin, "Ostalgie-a part of a new East German identity?", 2003; Daphne Berdahl, *On the Social Life of Postsocialism*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2010.

Svetlana Boym, nostalgia is "a sense of loss and displacement" based on an obvious contrast between a romanticized version of the past and a present considered inferior nowadays<sup>3</sup>. Thus, nostalgia is not as much about the past but especially about the present and its relationship with the future. In this respect, Fred Davis stated that the object of nostalgia is not the past in itself but a past with special features, whose significance must be deciphered in relation with the realities of the present<sup>4</sup>. Also, the present-future relationship as part of the nostalgic feeling is explicable from the point of view that stresses that the contemporary developments that have caused such an approach to the past, also trigger similar concerns for the near future. In such context, nostalgia functions as a "defense mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals"<sup>5</sup>, as the ones determined by the post-communist transition. At the same time, it gives the individual a temporary refugee from the changes in the society he or she lives in and in which he or she feels alienated<sup>6</sup>.

As my paper will show, the emergence of communist nostalgia in Romania is related to the dramatic changes that the collapse of communism brought into people's lives. These changes could justify a romanticized remembrance of the past against the gloomy reality of the present and of the even gloomier future. Consequently, the population's feeling "of having lost out in the transition from communism to democracy"<sup>7</sup> was the result of the multiple restructurings of the establishment that not only changed its economic, political and social organization but also confronted the individual with challenges that contradicted or questioned his life experience up to that date. Consequently, the Romanians faced the perspective of losing their jobs and not finding work when the model of market economy and the liberalization of the labor market replaced the socialist paternalism. The Romanians also strove to learn the democratic lesson in less than 20 years as one former communist official predicted at the beginning of the 1990s and found out that their electoral choices could change their future for better or for worse. The disappearance of the socialist paternalistic state also put an end to the state's involvement in meeting the basic needs of its population (such as housing, food, holiday, employment, health). As my analysis of the opinion polls conducted during the second half of the 2000s will show, the lack of this kind of social protection was the main reason behind the positive evaluations of the communist regime and of the activity of its last leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu.

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<sup>3</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York, Basic Books, 2001, pp. xiii, xvi.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, New York, Free Press, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> Svetlana Boym, *op.cit.*, p. xiv.

<sup>6</sup> Christiana Goulding, "Romancing the Past. Heritage Visiting and the Nostalgic Consumer". *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 18, No. 6, p. 569.

<sup>7</sup> Joachim Ekman, *op.cit.*, p. 357.

Feelings of "yearning for a different time" also trigger a nostalgic approach to the past, a past associated with earlier stages of individual life. In this context, nostalgia is a symbolic rebellion against the irreversible passing of time that affects the human condition and also against the fast rhythm of modernity that accelerates change and the perception of time<sup>8</sup>. Fred Davis also states that individuals look with nostalgia towards their youth due to difficulties and major changes which they have to face as adults. While in their case nostalgia has an episodic character meant to help them face problematic situations, for the elderly part of the population, it is an integral part of an ongoing process of remembering and re-evaluating their entire existence, inevitably leading to a final threshold<sup>9</sup>. During my analysis of the opinion polls I drew the conclusion that people for whom the "normality"<sup>10</sup> of life in communism was their only life experience represented the great majority of those who had positive opinions about the communism and its regime in Romania.

Dominic Boyer states that the Western Europe uses the project of the European Union in order to express again its imperialist ambitions. Thus, he concludes that the emergence of communist nostalgia is a response to the identification of Eastern Europe as a subordinate, as the "backward" member in a relationship where the latter must fully learn and emulate the Western European lesson of capitalism and democracy<sup>11</sup>. As I will show below, Romania's integration in the European Union intensified the nostalgic discourse regarding the communist period as its status of second-hand country in the European project was further confirmed by the evolution of the relations between the Romanian state and the older European Union members.

My analysis of communist nostalgia in Romania also draws on the *memory studies*. The recollection of the past presupposes the existence of a memory about the periods of time, facts, objects that constitute the object of longing. Three concepts are important from the point of view of my investigation, *the collective memory*, Pierre Nora's *lieux de memoirs* and Alison Landsberg's *prosthetic memory*.

Maurice Halbwachs distinguishes between two types of memory, the *individual* and the *collective* one. For him, memories are socially

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<sup>8</sup> Svetlana Boym, *op.cit*, p. xv.

<sup>9</sup> Fred Davis, *op.cit*, pp. 52-71.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State. East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, 2008, Yale, University Press, pp. 8-9.

<sup>11</sup> Dominic Boyer "From Algos to Autonomos. Nostalgic Eastern Europe as Postimperial Mania" in Maria Todorova, Zsuzsa Gille (eds.), *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2010, pp. 17-28.

constructed and thus individuals acquire their memory in society. While the social memory is about a common but selected presence of the past, the individual recollections are dependent on what Halbwachs calls “the frameworks of social memory”<sup>12</sup>. Also, Svetlana Boym states that collective memory should be understood as “common landmarks of everyday life” which constitute “shared social frameworks of individual recollections”. These “shared everyday frameworks” of collective memory function as “sign posts for individual reminiscences that could suggest multiple narratives” in relation to the same subject<sup>13</sup>. The analysis of the people’s changing attitudes regarding the communist past and also the results of the opinion polls conducted especially during the 2000s can reveal how the Romanians recollect the communism and to what degree their collective memory about the period before December 1989 influence their nostalgic approach to it.

Pierr Nora speaks about *lieux de memoirs* (or *sites of memory*) that function as a kind of artificial substitutes or exterior signs for the memory that modern societies began to lose. Therefore, the past had to be recreated in sites of memory such as museums, memorials in order to be remembered<sup>14</sup>. In my case, Nicolae Ceaușescu’s birth house from Scornicești or his grave from Ghencea Civil Cemetery of Bucharest, Ceaușescu’s portraits and communist slogans that were carried out or shouted during social protests and also thematic exhibits about the communist past organized in different locations from Romania fulfilled the role of *lieux de memoirs*.

The birth of mass media technologies and the resulting mass cultural commodities (including memories) made possible a new type of memory, the *prosthetic memory*. This memory is not the result of a lived experience because it is derived from individuals’ encounters with mass mediated representations of the past (such as watching a film, visiting a museum, watching a television mini-series, etc.). Prosthetic memories “< speak > to the individual in a personal way as if they were actually memories of lived events”<sup>15</sup>. The concept of *prosthetic memory* is relevant for my paper from the perspective of the Romanian advertising industry’s efforts to foster a privileged connection of the consumers with the products advertised by using a pro-nostalgic mediated representation of the communist past. Also, my analysis of several sociological inquiries will

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<sup>12</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On the Collective Memory*, Chicago, 1992 apud. Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004, pp. 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> Svetlana Boym, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>14</sup> Pierr Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire”, *Representations*, Vol. 26, pp. 7-24.

<sup>15</sup> Alison Landsberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 2-21.

emphasize the existence of positive prosthetic memories about the communist period among young people.

My paper consists of three main parts. The first one aims at creating a chronological framework of the emergence of communist nostalgia in Romania, the second part analyzes the commodification of the Romanians' nostalgia for the communist past while the last one examines the results of opinion polls in order to highlight the nature of this nostalgia and also the sociological profile of the Romanian nostalgic.

### **Communist nostalgia in Romania-chronological framework**

The period of the 1990s and up until 2007 represented the first phase in the post-socialist normalization process which, according to Dominic Boyer, is represented by the criminalization of the communist regime and by distancing oneself from it<sup>16</sup>. As a result, any association with the recent past became an instrument of public disparagement. Thus, any nostalgic of communism was characterized as a backward person, rooted in the communist past and, therefore, unreceptive to new economic reforms or to democratic ruling<sup>17</sup>. During this period, public display of communist symbols was not considered a sign of nostalgia, but a form of protest against the country's government, whose actions would have canceled the supposedly regenerative potential and Romanians' hopes for the better after the revolution in December 1989. Thus, during some organized social protests in the 1990s in several economic centers, the participants expressed their disapproval of the government's economic policies by displaying portraits of Nicolae Ceaușescu, by chanting the slogans used in the communist period (*Ceaușescu-RCP!*, *Ceaușescu and the people!*) or anti-government slogans that made reference to the communist period (*Ceaușescu, we love you, next to you we want to be so that we do not to suffer!*, *Down with the Americans, we want the communists back!*, *Ceaușescu, do us good, call the chosen back to you!*)<sup>18</sup>. The inclusion of Ceaușescu's person as an

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<sup>16</sup> Dominic Boyer, "Ostalgie and the Politics of Future in Eastern Germany", *Public Culture*, vol. 18, No. 2 (2006), pp. 361-381.

<sup>17</sup> Dumitru Tinu, "Nostalgia normalității", *Adevărul*, 23 March 1999, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Dragoș Boța, "Sindicatelor s-au înrolat în urma lui Ceaușescu", *Adevărul*, 19 November 1999, p. 3; Bogdan Berneanu, "Nostalgia după Tovarășu' se extinde și în Oltenia", *Adevărul*, 19 November 1999, p. 3; Carmen Chihăia, "Cu portretul lui Ceaușescu în frunte, 2500 de constănțeni au strigat *Jos guvernul!*, *Demisia, demisia!*, *Asasinii, hoții!*", *Adevărul*, 19 November 1999, p. 3; Constantin Coroiu, "Marș sub semnul absurdului. Țevarii de la Tepro Iași cer azil politic în SUA strigând Trăiască Ceaușescu!", *Adevărul*, 16 November 1999, p. 1; "Ceaușescu fă-ne un bine, cheamă-i pe aleși la tine!", *Adevărul*, 20 February 2007, p. 4.

element of the social protests conveyed the message that the current failure of government policies, especially in the economic sector, exceeded through the extent of their negative consequences, the disastrous results of the economic options of his leadership in the last decade of his rule.

Despite the public ridicule they faced, nostalgic communists have created and preserved during the years a ritual involving visiting the birth-house from Scornicești of the former leader of RCP (Olt county) on his birthday. Subsequent pilgrimages were conducted to his grave in the Ghencea Civil cemetery of Bucharest also on his birthday or on Christmas day, the day Ceaușescu was shot by a firing squad. If initially the activities involved a reduced number of participants, especially members of the RCP's successor political parties since the mid-2000s, they were joined by other nostalgic people, unrelated directly with the above-mentioned political structures. The nostalgic ritual on these occasions included the deposition of wreaths and the organization of more or less ad hoc commemorative gatherings. They did not lack noisy appreciative speeches about the exceptional qualities of Ceaușescu's leadership which were accompanied by communist odes played on a portable audio device. The other participants applauded the speeches and added their own comments about "how it was better before"<sup>19</sup>.

As I mentioned before, in the second half of 2000s, an increasing number of Romanian citizens began to look with nostalgia to the period before December 1989. In order to find an explanation we should take a look at the economic context. After a short period of relative economic prosperity, people gradually began to experience the negative effects of the world economic crisis at the end of 2009. The following year, wages were low, prices have exploded, many companies went bankrupt and unemployment began to rise rapidly, reaching levels similar to those in the beginning of the 1990s. In addition, the difficulties caused by the global economic crisis were superimposed on the previous ones. These were generated by the inability

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<sup>19</sup> See Gigi Lazăr, "La cimitirul vesel - Ghencea Civil", *Adevărul*, 10 May 1993, pp. 1-2; Adrian Cercelescu, "Ieri în Ghencea. Dialog despre tacâmuri la mormântul lui Ceaușescu", *Adevărul*, 27 January 1995, pp. 1, 10; Glăman, Tudorel, "Adunați la Scornicești cu prilejul împlinirii a 80 de ani de la nașterea Tovarășului. Nostalgicii comuniști strâng rândurile în fața capitalismului", *Adevărul*, 26 January 1998, pp. 1, 16; Alin Bogdan, "Sâmbătă la Scornicești. O sută de nostalgici au făcut pelerinaj la casa părintească a lui Ceaușescu", *Adevărul*, 24 January 2000, p. 7; Răzvan Popa, "Ceaușescu, comemorat la Scornicești", *Adevărul*, 29 January 2001, p. 3; Ion M. Ioniță, "Aniversându-l la Scornicești, câteva sute de dezmoșteniți ai tranziției l-au plâns pe Ceaușescu", *Adevărul*, 28 January 2002, p. 2; Mihai Voinea, "Ceaușescu-PCR, Stima noastră unde e?", *Adevărul*, 27 ianuarie 2011, p. 26.

of post-communist governments to create or support an efficient economy that would sustain a sustainable economic development of the Romanian society and provide jobs for its citizens.

A second explanation concerning the emergence of the nostalgic phenomenon concerns the Romanian society's coming to terms with its communist legacy in the late 1990s. Communism became a subject of academic investigation when research institutes such as the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism or the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile were created in 1993 and 2005. In 1997, a Memorial of the Victims of Communism and Resistance was erected on the location of one of the most famous communist prisons, the one in Sighet. The National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives was established in 2000 in order to administer the archives of the former Communist secret police. In addition, it also undergoes through its specialized departments a thorough research of its documents. A final important development in the coming to terms with the communist past of the Romanian society was the creation in April 2006 of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Communist Dictatorship in Romania. The Commission published its final report in December 2006 and it was endorsed as an official document of the Romanian state by President Traian Băsescu<sup>20</sup>.

On the same line of the coming to terms with the communist past were inscribed several thematic exhibitions. For example, the exhibition hosted by the National Museum of Contemporary Art in 2005 familiarized or re-familiarized the public with the socialist realist art and the main reverential works of plastic art dedicated to Nicolae Ceaușescu<sup>21</sup>. A similar event hosted by the Union Museum from Alba Iulia included the display of objects from the communist period (insignia of PCR, medals, official diplomas, pioneer costumes, magazines and almanacs, electronics, banknotes and coins), photographs and original documents about Ceaușescu's working visits in the city and documents produced by the Securitate about the historical museum from Alba Iulia. In December 2010, a Communist-era bus, converted into a museum of the 1989 revolution, circulated on the main arteries of Alba Iulia<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Alina Hoge, "Coming to Terms with the Communist Past in Romania: An Analysis of the Political and media Discourse Concerning the Tismăneanu Report", *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2010, pp. 16-30.

<sup>21</sup> Florena Dobrescu, "La Muzeul de Artă Contemporană. Ceaușescu și prietenii", *Adevărul*, 18 March 2005, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> "Securitatea și Epoca de Aur în imagini", *Adevărul*, 19 May 2007, p. 1; Andreea Bărăgan, "Autobuz-muzeu", *Adevărul*, 22 December 2010, p. 7.

Romania's integration in the European Union was also an event that favored a nostalgic view of the past. That was because Romania's "acceptance in the European civilized world" confirmed its marginal status among the other European Union members. This development contrasted sharply with the image promoted by the communist propaganda of the Romanian state as an important actor in international politics for whom the relations with the Western world did not represent an opportunity of subordination or a motive of national inferiority. Moreover, the tendencies towards a cultural uniformity promoted by the European project, as some suspected, were also able to stimulate the sense of nostalgia for the communist past, accepted as a part of national specificity.

### **The Commodification of Communist Nostalgia**

The advertising industry took advantage of the Romanians' nostalgic feelings for the communist past in order to successfully promote some products. These have existed since the days of communism and were familiar with a certain (older) part of the Romanian public to such an extent that they became emblems/brands of this period.

Alison Landsberg states that cinema and other industries that capture and use images manage to "suture" the viewers into the past they have not lived by moving them across time and space and thus creating what she calls *prosthetic memory*<sup>23</sup>. As I will show below, the advertising spots use the leaping back in time technique in order to connect their audience, regardless its age, to the product advertised in the context of the communist period. Moreover, in order to trigger the nostalgic reaction of the viewers, the producers of these spots paid great attention to details that might render the familiar atmosphere of the communist period. Thus, the uniformization of the outfits, the stereotyped behaviour, the pale and blurred images reminiscent of old films, the specific music of that time or even the placing of the character of last communist leader in the spots were used to recreate a beautified version of the communist past.

My analysis will concentrate upon three commercial spots about goods that had their own history during communism: the Romanians' national car *Dacia*, *Rom* chocolate and *Pepsi Cola*. In all these cases, the advertising strategies focused on highlighting the place and significance that these products had in people's lives during the communist period.

The video that was launched to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the car brand *Dacia* (*Celebrating our first 40 years*) remade the history of the

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<sup>23</sup> Alison Landsberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 12-14.



car by portraying the life story of an ordinary Romanian family: the youngster hanging out, the kiss in the back seat, the wedding, taking the pregnant wife to emergency in the middle of the night, the birth of the second child, the children's celebration moments at school, the family winter holidays, the boy's enrolment in the army, the wedding of the children and again the "youngster" who appears grey, but with the same old red Dacia car, from where it all began<sup>24</sup>.

The design for *Rom* chocolate's commercials was a mixture of nostalgia, black humour, whose target audience was not only the former Communist-era teenagers but also the young generation of today. Thus, those spots have as main characters two youngsters, a rocker with long hair and a young woman wearing a short skirt. They taste the *Rom* chocolate and unwillingly make a leap in time during the communist period. The rocker is forced up from the street and thrown into a black car by two employees of the Securitate. The young man is led blindfolded in a basement of the Securitate, where the head of the two employees, who reads the the Romanian Communist Party's newspaper *Scânteia*, communicates that the youngster is held because the party wants his hair cut. At the end of the spot, the young boy after having his hair cut to zero is thrown back into the street while the advertising slogan concludes that regardless of time, enjoying *Rom* chocolate is equivalent to strong sensations. After tasting the same chocolate, the girl wakes up in front of Nicolae Ceaușescu during one of his working visits. Outraged by her clothing, he tells her: "Comrade, we do not tolerate this miniskirt for communist youth. It's a challenge!". Therefore the girl is detained by the two supposedly Securitate men, conducted in a room, where she is offered a sober, communist dress and finally she is thrown into the school's hall<sup>25</sup>. These commercials and also the slogan under which they presented "Strong sensations of 1964" suggest that life under communism was not boring and monotonous, but it was actually "cool". Although such a message could be considered as more suitable for young audiences, the adults, at that time teenagers, could also identify themselves with the image of nonconformity promoted by these ads.

The Pepsi Cola advertising campaign that started in 2011 under the slogan *Today, the same as yesterday* used mainly photographic material in order to stimulate the consumers' interests for this product based on their

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<sup>24</sup> Marius Florin Drașovean, "Mitul Ceaușescu în publicitate sau despre cum se comercializează nostalgia", *Jurnalism și comunicare*, Vol. III, No. 1-2, 2008p. 88.

<sup>25</sup> The spots can be seen on Youtube at the following addresses :<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pm8K1q0N-F4>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5BsN9BKoFI&feature=related>, last entry 22August 2013.

nostalgic feelings for the communist period. The campaign was carried out by placing huge colorful posters in the centre of Romania's big cities and Bucharest. The advertisements also appeared in the pages of the main national newspapers or on different popular websites (such as mail.yahoo.com) and it addressed both youth and their parents. Essentially, the campaign message was that young people today and those from communism shared their ways of enjoying life (through socialization, fashion, holidays, romantic relationships), although the means were different now. The only thing that has not changed over the years was that Pepsi Cola was and still is part of the dream of youth<sup>26</sup>.

The services industry also participated in this commodification of the Romanians' nostalgic feelings for the communist past. Thus, in the Romanian capital, Bucharest, several clubs distinguish themselves by trying to symbolically reproduce the atmosphere of the communist period. One of them, *El Dictator* is decorated with large portraits, statues of famous dictators of the twentieth century, including Nicolae Ceaușescu, antiques and placards with communist slogans and its dancing floor has a floor built on a former railway and enlightened by all sorts of colours. Another local club special is *The Spark* (referring to the name of the official newspaper of the Communist Party), where in addition to a menu with Romanian traditional dishes, customers can also try some exotic ones such as the *Ana Pauker pickles salad*, delicacies like the *The Red Army* or *CAP* (agricultural production cooperative, the main form of socialist organization of agriculture in Romani) and last but not least, the *Spark* vermouth cocktail<sup>27</sup>.

### Assessing Communist Nostalgia: The Opinion Polls

My analysis of the opinion polls conducted after December 1989 has several purposes: the identification of the positive associations of the communist past, the sociological profile of the nostalgic person and the emergence of a secondary or *vicarious nostalgia*<sup>28</sup> for the communist past among the Romanian youth.

The positive associations regarding the communist past consider two main issues: the person and the political activity of the last Romanian

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<sup>26</sup> Sonia Ardealea, "Ștefan Chirițescu despre campania 'Pepsi-Cola. Și ieri. Și azi': "Este o celebrare a bucuriei de a trăi, indiferent de ce înseamnă un sistem politic sau dezvoltarea tehnologică", [http://www.iqads.ro/a\\_14456/stefan\\_chiritescu\\_despre\\_campania\\_pepsi\\_cola\\_si\\_ieri\\_si\\_azi\\_este\\_o\\_celebrare\\_a\\_bucuriei\\_de\\_a\\_trai\\_indiferent\\_de\\_ce\\_inseamna\\_u\\_n\\_sistem\\_politic\\_sau\\_dezvoltarea\\_tehnologica.html](http://www.iqads.ro/a_14456/stefan_chiritescu_despre_campania_pepsi_cola_si_ieri_si_azi_este_o_celebrare_a_bucuriei_de_a_trai_indiferent_de_ce_inseamna_u_n_sistem_politic_sau_dezvoltarea_tehnologica.html), last entry 24 May 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Emilia Sava, "Salată Ana Pauker și cocktail Scânteia", *Adevărul*, 1 March 2010, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Christiana Goulding, "Romancing the Past. Heritage Visiting and the Nostalgic Consumer", *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 18, No. 6, 2001, pp. 584-585.

communist leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu and the communist regime's economic and social performance.

Since the early years of the transition period, a series of surveys showed a certain ambivalence towards Ceaușescu's role in the country's recent history. Thus, the way he was perceived by a segment of the population was not entirely negative. That was because the economic difficulties from the last years of his rule were partially forgotten or overshadowed by the contemporary hardships and his political mistakes attributed to the harmful influence of his wife and entourage.

In 1999, 22% of the questioned Romanians felt that Nicolae Ceaușescu was the leader who worst damaged the country and also 22% responded that he contributed most to the well-being of the Romanians<sup>29</sup>. In 2007, the Romanian Television organized a national competition during which the public was invited to vote the most prominent Romanian. Nicolae Ceaușescu reached a surprising position of 11 of the 100 nominees in the final ranking<sup>30</sup>. In December 2007, a new survey revealed that 23% of the respondents considered that Ceaușescu was the best political leader that Romania had in the past 100 years, while 24% put him first in a ranking of leaders who have done the worst to the country in the same range<sup>31</sup>. In July 2010, 41% of the questioned Romanians said that they would vote for President Ceaușescu while 52% said that they would not vote for him in the case of approaching elections. The same survey mentioned that 49% of the respondents considered Ceaușescu to be a good leader as opposed to 15% who mentioned that he was a bad leader and 30% who had mixed opinions about him<sup>32</sup>. In September 2010, Nicolae Ceaușescu was perceived by 46% of the interviewed Romanians as the leader who did both good and bad to Romania, 15% believed he only harmed the country compared to 25% who maintained that he had done only good to Romania<sup>33</sup>.

The results of these surveys show that at least until 2010 a part of the population had an ambivalent attitude towards Nicolae Ceaușescu and

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<sup>29</sup> "Potrivit unui sondaj național al CURS despre nenorocirile abătute asupra României, Emil Constantinescu pe un prețios loc II după Nicolae Ceaușescu", *Adevărul*, 17 November 1999, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Valentin Protopopescu, *Mari Români. Povestea unui succes mediatic*, Bucharest, 2007, p. 72.

<sup>31</sup> Aniela Nine, "Barometru de opinie - Ceaușescu, înger și demon", 2007

<http://www.9am.ro/stiri-revista-presei/2007-12-06/barometru-de-opinie-ceausescu-inger-si-demon.html>, last entry 25 May 2012.

<sup>32</sup> "Românii și nostalgia comunismului", IRES-IRESROP, July 2010, [http://www.ires.com.ro/uploads/articole/romanii\\_si\\_nostalgia\\_comunismului.pdf](http://www.ires.com.ro/uploads/articole/romanii_si_nostalgia_comunismului.pdf), last entry 24 May 2012.

<sup>33</sup> "Percepția actuală asupra comunismului", September, 2010, [http://www.crimelecomunismului.ro/pdf/ro/evenimente/perceptiile\\_romanilor\\_asupra\\_comunismului/perceptia\\_actuala\\_asupra\\_comunismului.pdf](http://www.crimelecomunismului.ro/pdf/ro/evenimente/perceptiile_romanilor_asupra_comunismului/perceptia_actuala_asupra_comunismului.pdf), last entry 24 May 2012.

his deeds and also that there was a relatively steady percentage between those who had conflicting views regarding this topic. Moreover, only one quarter of the subjects interviewed had a favourable opinion about the Romanian communist leader. The fact that in 2010 the results of surveys have revealed a trend towards a revalorisation of Ceaușescu's activity could be associated with the negative effects of the economic crisis experienced by the population that associated his period of leadership with one of a relative, even if limited, economic prosperity and effective social protection measures.

Positive opinions about the communist past also regarded the RCP's internal politics. In a 2006 survey, 41% of the Romanian citizens considered communism a good idea but one that was badly implemented<sup>34</sup>. In July 2010, in a new survey 68% of respondents said the same thing<sup>35</sup>. In other three opinion polls conducted during August 2010-April 2011, this percentage decreased at an average of 45% (August 2010-47%, 2010-44% in September and in April 2011 to 43%)<sup>36</sup>. The results of another opinion poll published in September 2010 mentioned that 36% of respondents' assessments of the communist regime were negative, 46% were positive and 5% neutral. The positive associations were related to job security (10%), the safety of tomorrow (8%), decent living conditions (8%), equality of individuals (5%), and the opinion that the system was good (4%)<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, a question from the survey published in November 2010 about the role of the state within the Romanian society confirmed that respondents highly valued the state interventionism and social protection measures of a paternalist state. Thus, 72% respondents believed that the state should be involved in providing jobs, 51% preferred a centralized statist economy, 44% opted for the state to be involved in stabilizing prices and 43% considered the distribution of housing as an important task of the state<sup>38</sup>. Given that the positive associations with the communist regime were related mostly to particular economic matters, the surveys included the aspect of assessing the standard of living as an indicator of the level of

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>35</sup> "Românii și nostalgia comunismului", IRES-IRESOP, July 2010.

<sup>36</sup> "Atitudini și opinii despre regimul comunist din România. Sondaj de opinie publică, 23 May 2011", IICCMR -CSOP, 2011, [http://www.crimlecomunismului.ro/pdf/ro/raport\\_sondaj\\_opinie\\_publica\\_iiccmr\\_mai\\_2011.pdf](http://www.crimlecomunismului.ro/pdf/ro/raport_sondaj_opinie_publica_iiccmr_mai_2011.pdf), last entry 27 May 2012.

<sup>37</sup> "Atitudini și opinii despre regimul comunist din România. Sondaj de opinie publică, 20 September 2010", IICCMR -CSOP, [http://www.crimlecomunismului.ro/pdf/ro/evenimente/perceptiile\\_romanilor\\_asupra\\_comunismului/raport\\_sondaj\\_opinie.pdf](http://www.crimlecomunismului.ro/pdf/ro/evenimente/perceptiile_romanilor_asupra_comunismului/raport_sondaj_opinie.pdf), last entry 27 May 2012.

<sup>38</sup> "Atitudini și opinii despre regimul comunist din România. Sondaj de opinie publică, 15 November 2010", IICCMR -CSOP, [http://www.crimlecomunismului.ro/pdf/ro/evenimente/raport\\_sondaj\\_comunism.pdf](http://www.crimlecomunismului.ro/pdf/ro/evenimente/raport_sondaj_comunism.pdf), last entry 27 May 2012.

nostalgia for the communist past. In the July 2010 survey, 63 % of the respondents mentioned that people lived better before 1989, 23% that they did not and 9% considered that the population lived the same during and after the communist period. When asked to assess their present standard of living in comparison to the previous one, 54% of the survey subjects said they lived better in the communist period, 16% that they lived worse and 17% mentioned that they lived the same way<sup>39</sup>. In the September 2010 survey, 49% of participants answered that Romania was better under communism, 23% that it was worse than today, and 14% that it was the same<sup>40</sup>.

As one can notice, the results of the survey indicate that the Romanians' positive associations towards the communist regime, which are usually interpreted as sign of their nostalgia for the communist period are mainly related to economic and social context. Thus, Romanians highly value the former socialist state and especially its paternalist involvement in people's life (as the foremost regulator of the national economy or as the main provider of social welfare for its people) destroyed by the introduction of the market economy. Furthermore, the economic difficulties faced by Romania in 2010 may explain why people began to value the material safety of life during communism. The fact that the Romanians' nostalgia after the communist past is not of *restorative* type<sup>41</sup> is fully demonstrated by their answers to other questions of the above mentioned surveys. The survey published in September 2010 mentioned that 42% of respondents declared that the Communist regime was an illegitimate one, 51% of those interviewed called for the establishment of a National Museum of the Communist Dictatorship, while 52% agreed with formalizing a national day to commemorate the victims of the communist regime in Romania<sup>42</sup>. While wishing for an interventionist state, an overwhelming majority of the Romanians denied it the right of dissolving the political parties or they did not regret the fall of the communist regime back in December 1989<sup>43</sup>.

Two opinion polls in October 2006 and April 2011 have provided data on the sociological profile of the nostalgic people. If in 2006, the survey

<sup>39</sup> "Românii și nostalgia comunismului", IRES-IRESOP, July 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Atitudini și opinii despre regimul comunist din România. Sondaj de opinie publică, 20 September 2010, IICCMR -CSOP.

<sup>41</sup> According to Svetlana Boym, *restorative nostalgia* "attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home" aiming not only "to rebuild the lost home" but also to "patch up the memory gaps" in Svetlana Boym, *op.cit.*, pp. xviii, p. 41.

<sup>42</sup> "Atitudini și opinii despre regimul comunist din România", IICCMR -CSOP 20 September 2010.

<sup>43</sup> "Românii și nostalgia comunismului", IRES-IRESOP, July 2010; "Atitudini și opinii despre regimul comunist din România. Sondaj de opinie publică, 15 November 2010", IICCMR -CSOP.

results indicated that people over 55 years old, with a low education level and income and from undeveloped rural areas (Wallachia and Moldova) had positive feelings for the communist past<sup>44</sup>, the one in 2011 offered a different and more nuanced picture. Three categories of individuals aged 20-39, 40-59 and 60 + years, irrespective of sex, believed communism to be a good idea, but poorly implemented (39%, 47% and 49%). Depending on their residence, 42% of them lived in rural areas and 44% in urban areas. Although there were no major differences between the regions regarding positive evaluation of the communist past, the average evolving around 45%, Moldova and Wallachia are situated with a few percentages above this limit. Moreover, the opinion poll indicates that nostalgics did not masively reside in relatively poor regions of the country as the West and the capital city are reaching or even exceeding the national average percentage<sup>45</sup>.

The same survey in 2011 confirmed the conclusion of a study by the *Soros Foundation in Romania* in 2010 that the young generation, who knew no communism at all, tends to have a positive image about it. Thus, 31% of the age group under 20 says that communism was a good idea yet poorly implemented. The results of the study from 2010 indicate that 38% of the adolescents believe that communism was a better period than the contemporary one. The motives for which teenagers tend to emphasize the period before 1989 were related to their complaints about the current education and health systems, the inability of the state to enforce its laws and last but not least, the standard of living was considered to be lower than in the communist period. Identifying in a proportion of 82% the family as the primary source of socialization in relation to the past, the report findings indicate that 62% of cases in which parents are perceived as nostalgic, their children have a positive opinion about the communist regime<sup>46</sup>.

Concluding, the surveys' results confirm that people who experienced the "normality" of life during communism tend to have a more positive image about this period. The Romanian adolescents' nostalgic approach to communist times may be explained in terms of parental influence or as noted before, due to some marketing strategies that strove to create an idealized image of the communist period. They downplayed the

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<sup>44</sup> "Percepția actuală asupra comunismului", 2006, [http://www.soros.ro/ro/comunicate\\_detaliu.php?comunicat=21](http://www.soros.ro/ro/comunicate_detaliu.php?comunicat=21), last entry 27 May 2012.

<sup>45</sup> "Atitudini și opinii despre regimul comunist din România. Sondaj de opinie publică, 23 May 2011", IICCMR –CSOP.

<sup>46</sup> Andrei Gheorghiuță, "Trecutul comunist în conștiința adolescenților" in Gabriel Bădescu, Mircea Comșa, Andrei Gheorghiuță, Cristina Stănuș, Claudiu D. Tufiș, *Implicarea civică și politică a tinerilor*, Constanta, 2010, <http://www.soros.ro/ro/publicatii.php#>, last entry 27 May 2012.

repressive character of the communist regime to match it with a laughable version of the communist authority directed against the younger generation's nonconformism.

### **Conclusions**

To summarize the findings of my paper, the communist nostalgia manifested in Romania is mainly the result of the profound transformations that the transition period brought into the lives of people. While the advantages of the liberal democracy are welcomed, the economic consequences and especially the disappearance of the social protection provided by the socialist paternalist state are considered unfortunate. Moreover, nostalgia is related to the age factor not only because older generations experienced communism before 1989 but also because they tend to associate it with childhood or youth, usually the happiest parts in one's existence. The youth's little knowledge about the communist period and also the positive images about it that they received from the family or through mass media can explain this otherwise inexplicable longing for the communist past.

# Clichés and Stereotypes in the Official Discourse at the Beginning of the Year 1990.

## A Few Similarities with the Communist Political Discourse

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on some aspects concerning the semantics of the official discourse in the first half of 1990. We also tried to identify clichés and stereotypes in Ion Iliescu’s and National Salvation Front’s (N. S. F.) representatives’ speeches. These realities regarding the political discourse are somehow similar to those of the late 1940’s and the beginning of the 1950’s. Maybe surprisingly, but we also found out a few similarities with the discourse of the General secretary of Romanian Communist Party, Nicolae Ceaușescu. Although he condemned the cult of personality dedicated to the former dictator, Ion Iliescu himself enjoyed a sort of incipient form of personality cult during the electoral campaign of 1990.

**Keywords:** clichés, stereotypes, National Salvation Front, Ion Iliescu, Nicolae Ceaușescu, political discourse

**Rezumat:** Clișee și stereotipuri în discursul oficial la începutul anului 1990. Câteva similități cu discursul politic comunist. Studiul de față abordează câteva aspecte privind semantica discursului oficial în prima jumătate a lui 1990. În același timp, am încercat să identificăm clișee și stereotipuri în discursurile lui Ion Iliescu și ale reprezentanților Frontului Salvării Naționale (F. S. N.). Aceste realități sunt, într-o oarecare măsură, asemănătoare cu cele de la finele anilor 1940 și începutul anilor 1950. Poate părea surprinzător, dar am descoperit, de asemenea, similități cu discursul secretarului general al Partidului Comunist Român, Nicolae Ceaușescu. Deși a condamnat cultul personalității fostului dictator, Ion Iliescu însuși s-a bucurat de o formă incipientă de cult al personalității în timpul campaniei electorale din 1990.

**Cuvinte cheie:** clișee, stereotipuri, Frontul Salvării Naționale, Ion Iliescu, Nicolae Ceaușescu, discurs politic

The present study aims to carry out a brief analysis of the official discourse in Romania after the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s regime in December 1989. The intent is to establish a parallel with the appropriate political discourse of the Communist regime. We noted some striking similarities between both the speeches and statements of Ion Iliescu, Chairman of the Council of the National Salvation Front (C. N. S. F.) and subsequently of the Provisional Council of National Unity (P. C. N. U.) and the language of the official post-



communist press, on the one hand and the discourse of communist power imposed in Romania in the second half of the 1940s, by the Soviet Union and the Red Army, on the other. In some cases, paradoxically, the speeches of the former dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu contain similar clichés and stereotypes. This is one of the reasons for which the following political regime has been qualified by some historiographers as neo-communist.<sup>1</sup>

The above reality, discerned from the very first months after the power seizure by the people of the second echelon of the Romanian Communist Party, became apparent in the context of January and February 1990 unrests and, in particular, on the occasion of the so called *University Square phenomenon*<sup>2</sup>. The marathon manifestation of the University Square in Bucharest should be understood as a direct consequence of the state of affairs in Romania after December 22, 1989.<sup>3</sup> The rally, which lasted for almost two months gathered a certain part of the Romanian civil society, which was in full process of formation and maturation. The demonstration was brutally suppressed in June 1990.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Romanian democracy took on a false start.

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<sup>1</sup> See Mihnea Berindei, Ariadna Combes, Anne Planche, *Mineriada 13-15 iunie 1990. Realitatea unei puteri comuniste*, București, Humanitas, 2010; Catherine Durandin, *Moartea Ceaușeștilor. Adevărul despre o lovitură de stat comunistă*, București, Humanitas, 2011, translated by Marina Mureșanu Ionescu.

<sup>2</sup> The strong demonstration directed against the clear intentions of the new Bucharest leaders of keeping communism in Romania, only embellishing its image, is reflected either comprehensively or in a more lacunar manner in various works, among which: *Piața Universității*, coordinating editor George Dumbrăveanu; Alexandru Paleologu, *Minunatele amintiri ale unui ambasador al golanilor*, București, Humanitas, 1991, translated by Alexandru Ciolan; Alex. Mihai Stoenescu, *România postcomunistă 1989-1991*, București, Rao, 2008; Alina Mungiu, *România după '89. Istoria unei neînțelegeri*, București, Humanitas, 1995; Domnița Ștefănescu, *11 ani din istoria României. Decembrie 1989-decembrie 2000*, București, Mașina de Scris, 2011; Stan Stoica, *România după 1989. O istorie cronologică*, București, Meronia, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> The Romanian Revolution of December 1989, as well as its antecedents are treated, both chronologically and analytically, in various works, including Peter Siani-Davies, *Revoluția română din decembrie 1989*, București, Humanitas, 2006, translated by Cristina Mac; Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Decembrie 1989. Deconstrucția unei revoluții*, Iași, Polirom, 2004; Alex. Mihai Stoenescu, *Cronologia evenimentelor din decembrie 1989*, București, Rao, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> A lot of books and especially articles were written on the most violent and bloody *Mineriad* (the one in June 1990). So, the purpose of this paper is not a presentation of it and of the horrors involved. It is necessary, however, to review some of the most important historiographical contributions that have described and analysed this difficult moment in the recent Romanian history. Probably one of the most significant works dedicated to the subject is the one signed by Alin Rus, *Mineriadele. Între manipulare politică și solidaritate muncitorească*, București, Curtea Veche, 2007. As sociologist, the author was able to resort to plausible explanations and interpretations, addressing the facts in an

The period between December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1989, and April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1990 (when the above mentioned demonstration started) is characterized by uncertainties and social turmoil, whose climax was reached between June 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

Following a protest demonstration on January, 12, 1990, the Leadership Council of the National Salvation Front, which took the power after December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1989, initially gave up to the wishes of the people in the street and ordered to outlaw the Romanian Communist Party. The decree legitimising the dissolution was, however, repealed almost immediately. Moreover, the leaders of the National Salvation Front (N.S.F), including Ion Iliescu, stated that The Front was only a provisional political force, with the aim of organising free elections.<sup>5</sup>

Political life in Romania experienced turmoil due to N. S. F. 's notice on January 28, on the transformation into a political party and its participation into elections<sup>6</sup> despite earlier promises and assurances, depicting just an intention to do the contrary. It is obvious N. S. F. wanted to seize complete power. Ion Iliescu justified the transformation of his formation in a political party by the fact that the Front has been born during the spontaneous revolution, representing an 'emanation' of it.<sup>7</sup> Yet, we share the opinion of Alexandru Paleologu, Romanian Ambassador in Paris, at the beginning of 1990. Thus, while announcing the end of communism, the Bucharest authorities perpetuated its essence,<sup>8</sup> without Nicolae Ceaușescu.

The televised speech of the President of the National Salvation Front's Council, spoken immediately after the power seizure, constitutes irrefutable evidence. The appellative "comrades", can be interpreted as an expression of a reflex, of inaction. Moreover, all the evils of Communist totalitarianism were put in a simplistic and distorted manner, only on the account of Ceaușescu and his 'giddy clique'. The former General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party (R.C.P.) has been characterized as a

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exhaustive manner. A chapter is also encountered in the notable analysis entitled "Mineriadele. O poveste amară" in Ruxandra Cesereanu's volume, *Imaginarul violent al românilor*, București, Humanitas, 2003, as well as in M. Dean, Ariadna Combes, Anne Planche, *Mineriada 13-15 iunie 1990. Realitatea unei puteri comuniste*. Whereas it tends to the remarkable reconstitution of representative events, *Raportul asupra evenimentelor din 13-15 iunie 1990*, edited by the Group for Social Dialogue and the Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Romania-Helsinki Committee, is summoned as a precious and indispensable document.

<sup>5</sup> Domnița Ștefănescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56-57.

<sup>7</sup> Historiography denies Ion Iliescu's thesis. See, in this regard, P. Siani-Davies, *Revoluția română...*, pp. 239-243.

<sup>8</sup> Alexandru Paleologu, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

heartless and brainless man, who would defile the memory of those who sacrificed themselves for the Communist cause. Were we to give credit to the words of C. N. S. F. President, the Communist regime was not evil, quite the contrary, it was one with many virtues. These virtues might have been compromised by irresponsible leaders, as well as the dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu. In reality, the criminal feature of the Communist regimes has been revealed, ending about 100 million lives worldwide<sup>9</sup>, from the Soviet Union to Maoist China, North Korea up in Cambodia and Afghanistan, in the sovietised and satellite states from Central-Eastern Europe, in Africa and in Latin America. However, President Iliescu knowingly circumvented these issues, by accusing only his predecessor.

In this context, the formation and political career of the new leader in Bucharest cannot be denied. Being a prominent member of the Communist Party, Ion Iliescu was a member of the Central Committee (C. C.) and occupied the position of First secretary of the C. C. of the Communist Youth Union. In the early '70 s Ion Iliescu began to criticize Ceaușescu's cult of personality. However, he will be secretary of the Timiș county RCP (1971-1974) and even First secretary of the Iași county RCP (1974-1978). He continued to have a critical attitude towards Ceaușescu's regime. In 1984, he lost his Central Committee seat. We believe that Iliescu's marginalization by the nationalist communist Ceaușescu might have been due to the undeniable philo-Soviet attitude of the first. According to some, the distancing of the future leader of N. S. F. from the R. C. P. General Secretary had happened after the latter's visit to China and North Korea in 1971 and the emergence of the mini-cultural revolution materialized in the July Theses.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Stéphane Courtois (coord.), *Cartea neagră a comunismului: crime, teroare, represiune*, translated by Ileana Busuioc, Maria Ivanescu, Doina Jela Despois, Emanoil Marcu, Brândușa Prelipceanu, Luana Schidu, București, Humanitas, 1998. The French historian considered that a total of approximately 100,000,000 people have been victims of communist terror all over the world.

<sup>10</sup> Adam Tolnay, "Ceaușescu's Journey to the East", p. 10, available on [http://www.ceaurescu.org/ceaurescu\\_texts/TolnayPAPER.pdf](http://www.ceaurescu.org/ceaurescu_texts/TolnayPAPER.pdf), 12 January 2013, 11 A. M. On July, 6<sup>th</sup>, 1971, The General Secretary of the R. C. P. presented to the Executive Committee a series of proposals to "improve the political-ideological activity of the Marxist-Leninist education of the party members and of all Romanians." The July theses called for centralization of the control of culture, education and the mass media under the aegis of the Communist Party and its executive officials; expansion of ideological and propagandistic efforts among the masses, using both re-education techniques and large scale cultural movements; a synthesis of Marxism-Leninism and Romanian nationalism to provide content for the media and producers of culture. The July Theses also condemned the bourgeois behavior and the cosmopolitanism. See also, among others,

Other key characters of the post-communist power were also more or less linked to the old communist "guard". Petre Roman was the son of Ernst (Valter) Neulander, who fought during the civil war in Spain, in the Red Brigades, along with other prominent Communists, such as Petre Borilă, Mihai Burcă, Gheorghe Stoica, and Constantin Doncea.<sup>11</sup> Silviu Brucan described by many as the "grey eminence" of the National Salvation Front, was the editor at the Communist party's newspaper, *Scînteia*, striving for the sovietisation and communisation of the country. Brucan had voiced against the students who had manifested in favour of King Michael, on November 8, 1945 and had called for the death sentence to the President of the National Peasant's Party (N. P. P.), Iuliu Maniu. It is not excluded that Maniu, one of the most prominent personalities of the Romanian inter-war political life as a democrat, had he not enjoyed overwhelming popularity among the population, would have shared the tragic fate of the leader of the Agrarian Union of Bulgaria, Nicola Petkov. Petkov was condemned to death by hanging. Otherwise, the sympathy he was enjoying was proven on the occasion of the elections falsified by the Petru Groza Government and the Bloc of Democratic Parties in November 1946.

The Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party (C. D. N. P. P.)<sup>12</sup> and the National Liberal Party (N. L. P.) swiftly responded to the protest rally of the main opposition party, on 28 January 1990, N.S.F., calling on the workers at the Bucharest Heavy Machinery Enterprise (Întreprinderea de Mașini Grele București - I. M. G. B.) and the miners of the Jiu Valley. The Prime Minister, Petre Roman, had to declare to his supporters that the opponents have been debunked. Alina Mungiu<sup>13</sup> pointed out correctly that

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Dennis Deletant, *România sub regimul comunist*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, edited by Romulus Rusan, translated by Delia Răzdolescu, București, Fundația Academia Civică, 2006; Idem, *Ceaușescu și Securitatea. Constrângere și disidență în România anilor 1965-1989*, translated by Georgeta Ciocaltea, București, Humanitas, 1998.

<sup>11</sup> For issues related to Communist leaders' biographies, see Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism pentru eternitate: o istorie politică a comunismului românesc. Amintire, dezvăluiri, portrete*, Iași, Polirom, 2005, pp. 291-305, Idem, *Lunea secretă a nomenclaturii. Amintiri, dezvăluiri, portrete*, București, Humanitas, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> The Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party (C. D. N. P. P.) most vehemently opposed the tendencies of the National Salvation Front of monopolizing power in 1990. Christian Democrats were represented in the Provisional Council of National Unity; Lavinia Stan, "From Riches to Rags: The Romanian Christian Democratic Peasant Party", *East European Quarterly*, XXXIX. No. 2, June 2005, pp. 183-184. For a cogent and conclusive analysis of the realities of the political life during the transition, see Idem., "Democratic Delusions. Ten Myths Accepted by the Romanian Democratic Opposition", *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 50, no. 6, November-December, 2003, pp. 51-60.

<sup>13</sup> Alina Mungiu, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59. The author referred to the case of Doru Braia and the Action Committee for Democratization of the Army (A. C. D. A.).

the *unmasking* was *par excellence* a Stalinist process, which the power of N.S.F. used in 1990 to neutralize its opponents. On the other hand, the term evokes the memory of the monstrous experiment of re-education between 1949 and 1952 in Pitești<sup>14</sup>, Gherla, Aiud and Danube-Black Sea Canal, when the victim was losing every trace of reason and became an executioner.

The violent interventions of the miners in the Capital were known in the media and in historiography as *mineriads*. The first intervention took place on January, 29<sup>th</sup> 1990. The *mineriads* had extremely negative repercussions in the political, economic, social and psychological environments<sup>15</sup>. Addressing this issue, the sociologist Alin Rus<sup>16</sup> considered that we were actually not facing social movements, but social counter movements, whereas the *mineriads* themselves were built up in the harsh reactions to the social movements already under way (the opposition's demonstrations and the marathon demonstration from the University Square), in order to stop them brutally. The same author, sharing the opinion of state prosecutor Dan Voinea, who instrumented the file of the *mineriad* of June 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>, 1990, used the term of *state terrorism*, which was directed against its own citizens.<sup>17</sup> In fact, in December 1989, Ceaușescu's regime also turned to the workers who were to play the role of paramilitary formations, prepared to "discipline" Timișoara's rebellious. However, the intention has not materialized, and the workers brought in from Oltenia with special trains eventually turned back. The N. S. F. regime managed to "accomplish" in the first half of the 1990's (and not once only) what Nicolae Ceaușescu was not able to. The *mineriads* have deeply affected the image of Romania abroad. The Westerners' solidarity with the ideals of Romanians and the popularity increased by the events of 1989 progressively and irreversibly evaporated due to the most violent of the *mineriads* (in June 1990).

On January, 29<sup>th</sup> 1990, "Death to the intellectuals!"<sup>18</sup> was chanted in post-Communist Romania for the first time. For any Communist or Communist originated regime, the working class, the proletariat was the ruling class of society, benefiting from a privileged class status. This working class was intended to defeat the resistance of the reluctant categories in the period of the Romanian communization.<sup>19</sup> In other

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<sup>14</sup> A. Mureșan, *Pitești. Cronica unei sinucideri asistate*, preface by Ruxandra Cesereanu, Iași, Polirom, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> S. Stoica, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> A. Rus, *op. cit.*, pp. 434-445.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>18</sup> Domnița Ștefănescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>19</sup> Călin Morar-Vulcu, *Republica își făurește oamenii. Construcția identităților politice în discursul oficial din România, 1948-1965*, Cluj-Napoca, Eikon, 2007, pp. 241-256; Andi-

occasions, the Front partisans will complement the above slogan with another, "We work, not think!" which denotes the same hatred for the intellectuals, placed in an irreconcilable and permanent antithesis with those who did physical work. Călin Morar-Vulcu observed that during the Communist regime, especially during the period from 1948 to 1965, the expression of *working peasantry* (from which exploitative elements were excluded), allied to the proletariat<sup>20</sup> in the work for the building of socialism, was very commonly used.

The aversion to intellectuals resulted in the true hunt directed against persons who wore beards, glasses or simply had a book in hand (that is, those who were likely to be intellectuals) during the June 1990 *mineriad*.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the new regime, established on December 22, 1989, has consistently applied the principle of *divide et impera*.<sup>22</sup>, as did the Communist rule in Romania after 1945, with the support of the Soviet Union, If those who have usurped power with foreign aid in the second half of the fifth decade of the twentieth century used this method to divide the traditional parties, drawing from their dissenting factions (the notorious cases of the Anton Alexandrescu wing of N. P. P. and the Gheorghe Tătărescu wing of N. L. P.)<sup>23</sup>, the 1990 regime instigated workers against intellectuals,<sup>24</sup> Romanians against Hungarians (the relevant case of exacerbated violence in Târgu-Mureș in March 1990) and Romani (during the *mineriad* of June there were some mini-pogroms in several new neighbourhoods such as Ferentari and Rahova<sup>25</sup>, having a majority of Romani population).

The National Salvation Front acted in 1990, as the communist party did in 1946, during the election campaign, to the discrediting and the demonizing of the democratic parties such as the National Peasants' Party and National Liberal Party. Similarities between the system of popular democracy in the late '40s and early '50s, and the post-Ceaușescu power are numerous. At the Front's counter-manifestations, "Down with the sons of kulaks and legionnaires!"<sup>26</sup> was also chanted. The Communist regime in

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Emanuel Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive în România democrat-populară*, București, Albatros, 1993.

<sup>20</sup> Călin Morar-Vulcu, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>21</sup> A. Rus, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> Hadrian Gorun, "Putere și opoziție: semantica discursului oficial din primele luni postdecembriste", *Sfera Politicii*, nr. 1 (173)/2013, p. 138.

<sup>23</sup> Keith Hitchins, *România 1866-1947*, București, Humanitas, 1996, translated by George Potra and Delia Răzdolescu, p. 549.

<sup>24</sup> See *supra*.

<sup>25</sup> A. Rus, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-139.

<sup>26</sup> Domnița Ștefănescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

Romania and the communist historiography<sup>27</sup> permanently attributed negative traits essentially to members of the Iron Guard (a far-right political organization in Inter-War Romania), though a number of them have been "recovered". They have become members of the Communist Party. The *Kulaks*<sup>28</sup>, wealthy peasants, who had the ability to use paid labour force, were, in turn, presented, not at all incidentally, in a negative light by the communist propaganda. The Kulaks formed the peasant class that opposed the strongest resistance to forced collectivization.

After the kulaks were persecuted and physically annihilated by the Communists in large numbers, their descendants attracted the hostility of the N. S. F. supporters. Moreover, a new attitude was, if it is considered that N. S. F. continued, to a certain extent, the single party methods, only tolerating the existence of a *de facto* opposition. This claim is supported by the developments in the first half of the 1990s.

After the February, 18<sup>th</sup> 1990 protest of the opposition, and the N.S.F. counter-manifestation, Ion Iliescu used a certain type of speech that will characterize most of his public interventions later on. Thus, alluding to N. S. F's opponents, he condemned the acts of violence committed by "turbulent and criminal" elements.<sup>29</sup>

The electoral decree of March, 14<sup>th</sup>, 1990 stipulated that during the election campaign, all political parties and all candidates had the right to express their views freely during rallies, meetings, televised and broadcasted interventions or in press but without bringing any injury to the law order.<sup>30</sup> However, this "law order" was imposed by the 1965 Constitution; the new authorities did not expressly repeal the laws of the Communist regime.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, it is necessary to mention that the post-Communist State barely adopted a new fundamental law in 1991. Consequently, in 1990 the communist law was in force.

Amongst the demands of the demonstrators in the neo-communism free-zone of the University Square figured point 8 of the Timișoara

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<sup>27</sup> See, *inter alia*, Mihai Fătu, Ion Spălățelu, *Garda de fier- organizație teroristă de tip fascist*, București, Editura Politică, 1971.

<sup>28</sup> C. Morar-Vulcu, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-258. The author noted that as the collectivization process was moving forward, kulaks were no longer counted among the peasantry; they became concrete enemies of the peasants. Thus, the relationship between kulaks and peasants became antithetical, transforming in what the Marxist-Leninist theory called the *class struggle*.

<sup>29</sup> Domnița Ștefănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>30</sup> A. M. Stoenescu, *România postcomunistă 1989-1991*, p. 435.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 435-436.

Proclamation<sup>32</sup> forbidding candidacy of all former Communist activists and members of Securitate to public officials, for three consecutive legislatures. Familiar with the realities of totalitarianism of the far-left, Ion Iliescu (the president of the Provisional National Unity Council) did not accept any form of protest and no concession likely to jeopardise his privileged position at the head of the State. Thus, in a meeting of the body which exerted temporary legislative powers he has qualified the demonstrators in University Square as "tramps", after not long ago, Nicolae Ceaușescu, "the genius of the Carpathians" (as he was named by virtue of a brazen personality cult,<sup>33</sup> which not infrequently milled ridiculousness) had 'gratulated' the demonstrators in Timișoara with the name of "hooligans".

The protesters have replied assuming an offensive, hurtful and discrediting title, and turned it into a title of pride. Badges worn were distinguished by diversity: "tramp of good", "tramp of good faith", "tramp chief of foreign agency", "luxury tramp", "tramp bought with dollars"<sup>34</sup> and others. The first two gibed with finesse the speech of Ion Iliescu who, in a simplistic manner, indicated the preconceptions and stereotypes (otherwise the characteristic speech of the Communist regimes, or neo-communist), assigning exclusively positive traits to his own supporters, whom he identified with "good" or "good willed". The two phrases became clichés in the speeches and statements of representatives of N. S. F. According to its conception, the Romanian post-Ceaușescu society was polarised: on the one hand "good men" (assimilated by the power to the Front and supporters of President Ion Iliescu) and on the other hand, the "legionnaires" and "fascists" (almost currently qualified without distinction to label the opposition of the regime in its quasi-totalitarian procedure). The latter were minority, but they compensated with the intensity of their actions.<sup>35</sup>

Adversaries of N. S. F. were vigorously delimited by the first category: "we have never been confused with the people of good will,"<sup>36</sup> and irreconcilable differences and disputes persisted between the two camps. The authorities used the media and certain socio-professional categories to increase the difference between them. Thus, the flare of violence from June

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<sup>32</sup> Timișoara Proclamation was written on March, 11<sup>th</sup> 1990. Point 8 of the document opposed the attempts of NSF to seize power. This intention became clear after the decision to participate in the election. The most of NSF leaders were former Communist activists.

<sup>33</sup> See, inter alia, Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *Cultul lui Ceaușescu: Propagandă și putere politică în România comunistă*, Iași, Polirom, 2003.

<sup>34</sup> Roxana Lungu, „Noi nu suntem partide”, in *Piața Universității*, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Hadrian Gorun, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>36</sup> It can be affirmed that *Imnul golanilor* was a genuine programmatic document.



13<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup>, 1990 may be explained to some extent. If the revolutionaries from Timișoara had been in the foreign agencies service and endeavoured to sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Romania, as Ceaușescu had declared in his last public speech, those in the University Square would be "the legionnaires" for the new regime.

Demonstrators against N.S.F. claimed their independence, rejecting identification with any other political party,<sup>37</sup> even though, in their attempt to compromise and discredit them, the president, the government and their subservient press (including the *Azi*, *Dimineața*, *Adevărul* and *România muncitoare* newspapers)<sup>38</sup> insinuated that the University Square participants made the N. P. P. and N.L.P. games, supposedly being paid from abroad or by the traditional parties. The public television and the newspapers serving the power organized the virulent campaign of denigration against the demonstrators. They were qualified as "junkies" or "tramps". Thus, the public opinion was misinformed and manipulated. The effects of this campaign carried out by the mass media were soon visible, on the occasion of the June miners' strike. Then, the anger and aggressiveness of some people on the fringe surpassed, sometimes, that of the miners.

Strangely and paradoxically, though he blamed the personality cult dedicated to the former General Secretary of R. C. P., it can be appreciated, without venturing, that Ion Iliescu himself became, during the election campaign in 1990, the object of a cult of personality in an incipient stage. Let us remember the rallies and parades organized by N. S. F.: "Iliescu appears/The sun rises" or "Iliescu, be strong, /As Stephen the Great was"<sup>39</sup>. We may question if the Front followers have knowingly omitted that Nicolae Ceaușescu was, in turn, compared with the medieval ruler of Moldavia, embodying his very finest virtues.

President Iliescu is attributed with supernatural qualities as well, being able to influence the weather. The inference to the sun leads to an establishment of a connection, a parallel to the 1946 elections. The electoral sign of the Bloc of Democratic Parties, dominated by the Communists was the sun. In fact, deciphering the semantic contrasts of Ion Iliescu, it is reiterated that these are rather similar with the ones of the imposition of the brutal Communist regime in Romania. It is symptomatic that Iliescu used expressions such as "popular democracy". The concept is used by

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<sup>37</sup> Roxana Lungu, „Noi nu suntem partide”, p. 28.

<sup>38</sup> For the approval of the statements, see the numbers of those newspapers that appeared in the first half of 1990, which categorically condemned the University Square "phenomenon".

<sup>39</sup> M. Berindei, Ariadna Combes, Anne Planche, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

historiography relative to the political regimes and States of Eastern and Central Europe after 1945, in the process of sovietisation. On the other hand, if after 1945, the Romanian Communist Party had given a very broad understanding of the term "fascist", which incorporated all its opponents (real or fictitious), in 1990, President Iliescu considered the ones in the University Square to be legionnaires. Therefore, both the Communist Party of Romania, after 1945, and N. S. F., in 1990, turned the dictum "*Who is not with us is against us*".<sup>40</sup> into a postulate .

The intervention of the miners in June, 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> 1990 meant to bring to order the "legionnaires", "fascists" and "extremist elements" which had, allegedly, premeditated and organized, the so-called coup d'état of June 13<sup>th</sup>, was not only legitimate but also spontaneous for Iliescu and N. S. F. For example, the elected President met the miners with these words: "I ask you, miners, whom are grouped and organized; to get aligned on the boulevard until you reach the University Square and occupy it permanently. You'll be the guardians of this central point of the Capital, in cooperation with the forces of order [...]. Be sure to guard against all extremist elements that would reappear in this area. [...] Thank you all. Have a good and successful trip!".<sup>41</sup> The miners did not only cooperate with the forces of order, as president Iliescu recommended. In various situations they substituted them, by arrogating the powers of the police, which witnessed the violence committed by the miners. Sometimes, the violence of the miners was doubled by that of the police officers and the Romanian Intelligence agents, sometimes equipped in miners' overalls.<sup>42</sup>

To discredit the legionary-fascist plot thesis, the subservient media power, including the local press faked articles, whose ridicule might astonish today. Below, we present a sample, included in the *Piața Universității* volume, coordinated by Gheorghe Dumbrăveanu. The author is a certain Radu Eugeniu Star: "*Two hours after the Radio announced the coming of the miners in Bucharest, on the streets of Iasi one could hear almost only phrases denoting optimism and satisfaction. The riots in Bucharest have reinforced an older feeling about this city. For part of the recent inhabitants of Iași, the Capital is a city where the audience mostly consists of gypsies, dubious businessmen, tramps, to which it adds; look for yourselves, folks: fascists, Legionnaires, foreign agents, pimps and bubbling businessmen. Only in Bucharest could individuals such as Rațiu and Câmpeanu and Coposu have such success. [...] And the ones I've seen passing in front of the camera would have been able to kill their own parents for a pack of*

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<sup>40</sup> H. Gorun, *op. cit. , loc. cit. , p. 140.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 229-230.

<sup>42</sup> M. Berindei, Ariadna Combes, Anne Planche, *op. cit. , pp. 221-223.*

*cigarettes. [...] The most powerful attack was not given on television, neither by the police, nor the University Square. It was the seat of Government [...] At the University, Marian Munteanu [leader of the Students' League from the University of Bucharest] with a group of bandits dressed as miners, have beaten up the professors and destroyed the laboratories as to discredit the working class.[sic!] That's why he was arrested. Horia Sima and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu [sic!] were in the country and led the coup d'état attempt. Băneasa airport has already been captured. Bands of miners were trying to recover it[...]"*<sup>43</sup>

The solutions proposed by the author of this article disengaged out of a science fiction scenario are highlighted by extreme toughness: *"the immediate expulsion from the country of Rațiu and Cîmpeanu; the dismantling of the Architecture Institute and the re-establishing of another Institute organized on the basis of a new profile, accessible only to the sons of the workers and peasants, who know what work is and who haven't had time to think of rubbish [sic!]"*<sup>44</sup>

The text is phantasmagorical, constituting a veritable media delirium. It contains false or hallucinating information. Nicolae Ceaușescu spoke in December 1989, about traitors who "sold" themselves to the foreign countries for a handful of dollars. Opponents of Ion Iliescu and the Front did it, allegedly, only for American cigarettes. The information concerning the June 13<sup>th</sup> attack on the Victoria Square seat of Government was totally erroneous. In reality, there has not been any incident. This article contradicts the official thesis of the spontaneous movement of the miners in the Capital, indicating that the miners had been "called" to help the army in the desperate situation in which the country was. The idea of the mission assigned to the miners, namely the issue of the airport occupied by terrorists is utterly mesmerizing. In reality, there were no students disguised as miners that assaulted teachers at the University and at the Institute of Architecture on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of June. On the contrary, the miners' devastated and vandalized laboratories, lecture halls and seminar rooms, assaulted and molested students. It is absolutely hilarious to assert that Zelea-Codreanu was located in Romania, when the leader of the Legionary Movement had died more than 50 years before. The proposal of registering only the children of workers and peasants in the college is a reminder of the "proletariat dictatorship"; when the origin of the candidates, "the file", is considered decisive in order to be admitted to a higher education institution.

The two electoral campaigns, in 1946 and 1990, were held under the sign of intimidation and violence, seeming exact copies. In 1946 and 1990

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<sup>43</sup> Radu Dana Stan, "Uitați-vă și dumneavoastră, oameni buni! 14 iunie 1990. Pe străzile Iașului", in *Piața Universității*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*.

alike, the *Dreptatea* și *Liberalul* newspapers were printed with great difficulty or had not appeared at all. For a few days, during the June 1990 miners' strike, the daily newspaper *România Liberă*, known for its critical attitude toward N.S.F. and Ion Iliescu, has been banned. Opponents were, after 1945, and in early 1990, rejected, intimidated, terrorized and, ultimately, neutralised and even annihilated. The testimonies of those who have endured more or less the *Măgurele Inferno*<sup>45</sup> in June 1990 are more than telling. Detention conditions are reminiscent of the Gheorghiu-Dej prisons, noting that this time miners were also working as guards and investigators.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, we need to take a look at the speech of June, 15th delivered by Ion Iliescu, in which he thanked the miners for "the attitude of high civic consciousness",<sup>47</sup> that empowers him, to a certain extent, regarding the miners' call to Bucharest. The intent of creating the *national guards* reminds of the former Communist regime's patriotic guards: "we have discussed and we are thinking about the establishment of a National Guard [...] with well-trained, decided people, ready to intervene in exceptional moments, like the ones that took place on June 13. Miners of the Jiu Valley, I kept in mind the desire expressed by some of you to be integrated in such a National Guard and we will take this into account. I hope to maintain this spirit of combativeness, to anticipate it, because only through the resolute action of all people, of all the country's citizens, we will neutralize the degenerate, downgraded, fanatical elements, which want to destabilize the country."<sup>48</sup> In the President's view, the miners were meant, therefore, to play the role of a Praetorian armed guard of F.S.N. and of the regime.

Trying to analyse the discourse semantics of the new post-communist power, it is noticed that it has granted the opposition a purely formal and decorative role reducing it to the condition of façade opposition. In view of the above, it can be concluded that at the beginning of 1990, the establishment of a genuine democracy in Romania, in which the rights and freedoms of all citizens are respected, represented a fairly difficult and at the same time, a rather distant desideratum. In the official political discourse we also identified a series of clichés, stereotypes and simplistic labels of the opponents, which are reminiscent of the *wooden language*, methods and practices of the Communist regime.

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<sup>45</sup> A. Rus, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-147.

<sup>46</sup> H. Gorun, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, p.140.

<sup>47</sup> *Raport asupra evenimentelor...*, pp. 225-240.

<sup>48</sup> A. Rus, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

# Why weren't the official holidays of the inter-war period a reason of joy for all the Romanians?

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**Abstract:** The current article brings into focus a less-known topic in the history of Romanian inter-war period but which generated not only intensive debates but tensions inside the Transylvanian society as well, such as: the question of participation of the state officials and local officials at the religious services, at the national holidays. The text highlights the high expectations that the Romanians from Transylvania had when they had declared the union of territories inhabited by them in Hungary with Romania and the contribution of the two Romanian Churches from Transylvania on officializing the Romanian power in the province after the war. Emphasis is put on the interest of the Greek-Catholic Church after 1918 to obtain equal rights with the Orthodox Church and the relative success of this purpose, and then attitude of neglect from civil and military authorities of the state against the Greek-Catholic Church is analysed, during official holidays and not only. The reaction of the Greek-Catholic hierarchy was thorough in this regard from the beginning, condemning the discriminatory and offensive behavior to which it was subjected. The regulations concerning the official holidays in the inter-war period are analysed, the manner in which they were applied locally, the interventions carried out by the Greek-Catholic hierarchy to the decisional political factors, but also the fact that in the middle of the fourth decade of the last century the problem hadn't been solved in a way that would entirely please the Uniate Church.

**Keywords:** the Greek-Catholic Church, official holidays, religious assistance, discrimination, legislation.

**Rezumat:** De ce sărbătorile oficiale din perioada interbelică nu au reprezentat un motiv de bucurie pentru toți românii? Prezentul studiu aduce în atenție o temă mai puțin cunoscută din istoria interbelică românească, dar care generat nu numai dezbateri intense ci și tensiuni în rândul societății ardeleni: problema participării demnitarilor statului și a oficialilor locali la serviciile religioase prilejuite de sărbătorile naționale. Textul pune în lumină speranțele mari pe care românii din Transilvania le-au avut în momentul în care au declarat unirea teritoriilor locuite de ei din Ungaria cu România și contribuția celor două Biserici românești ardeleni la oficializarea puterii românești în provincie după război. Este accentuat interesul Bisericii greco-catolice pentru obținerea după 1918 a egalității de drepturi cu Biserica ortodoxă și succesul relativ al acestui deziderat, după care este analizată atitudinea de neglijare a autorităților civile și militare ale statului față de Biserica greco-catolică cu ocazia sărbătorilor oficiale și nu numai. Reacția ierarhiei greco-

catolice a fost una categorică de la început în această privință, condamându-se comportamentul discriminatoriu și ofensator la care era supusă. Sunt analizate reglementările privitoare la sărbătorile oficiale în perioada interbelică, modul în care acelea au fost aplicate la nivel local, intervențiile făcute de ierarhia greco-catolică pe lângă factorii politici de decizie, dar și faptul că la mijlocul deceniului patru al secolului trecut problema nu beneficiase de soluționare întru totul mulțumitoare pentru Biserica unită.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Biserica greco-catolică, sărbători oficiale, asistență religioasă, discriminare, legislație, memorii.

A genuine Romanian miracle. This is how we could describe the series of events during the last year of the Great War which made the foundation of the Greater Romania possible.<sup>1</sup> Few were those who still believed that the goal which had determined the Romanian political leaders to make the decision in the summer of 1916 of joining forces with the side fighting against the Central Powers could ever be fulfilled in the near future.<sup>2</sup> The gloomy perspective of a peace imposed by the enemy, the occupation of the territory and the exploitation of its resources, the social and economic disorder and privations, the perpetual search of a political solution that should try to mitigate the multitude of negative effects generated by the exhausting conflict – all these elements made up the complex scene of the unfortunate situation the country was in, during what turned out to be the last year of the war.<sup>3</sup> However, the course of events was far from predictable. Its evolution on a regional scale also reflected upon the Romanian area which, for instance, made the decision of union between the Moldavian Democratic Republic and Romania possible, on March the 27<sup>th</sup>/April the 9<sup>th</sup> 1918.<sup>4</sup> The territories of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy inhabited by Romanians vibrated, in turn, to the changes which intervened in the relation of forces between the two combative sides. For many contemporaries, the defeats suffered by the imperial army during the series of three battles on the course of the Piave river were able to announce the

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<sup>1</sup> S. Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul român*, București, Ed. Univers, 1998, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Ghe. I Brătianu, *Originile și formarea unității românești*, translated by Maria Pavel; edition, introduction and notes by Ion Toderașcu, Iași, Ed. Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 1998, p. 264; J. P. Niessen, „Naționalismul românesc: o ideologie a integrării și a mobilizării”, in vol. P. F Sugar, *Naționalismul est-european în secolul al XX-lea*, translation by Radu Paraschivescu, București, Ed. Curtea Veche, 2002, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> See C. Argetoianu, *Pentru cei de mâine. Amintiri din vremea celor de ieri*, the fourth volume, the fifth part, (1917-1918), edition and index by Stelian Neagoe, București, Ed. Humanitas, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> S. Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul român*, p. 46-48.

collapse of the dualist state.<sup>5</sup> Until the fall of 1918, under the influence of the program of world peace laid down by the American president Woodrow Wilson as well as the influence of the ideas disseminated by the Russian revolution, the cohabitant peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire went through the stages of some autonomizations in the form of councils and national guards.<sup>6</sup> The Romanians were no exception from this institutional trend, establishing a National Council in Budapest, with the signified intention to collaborate with the similar Hungarian political body. As the political scenario of the Romanian elite from Transylvania got clearer and clearer, the Romanian Central National Council became the epicenter of the actions which ended with the organization and initiating the Assembly in Alba Iulia.<sup>7</sup> Whether this reunion imposed itself through the significance of the decisions which were adopted, it's not less true that the Romanians' formal segregation from the destiny of Hungary was perceived as taking place in the moment of the solemn declaration made by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod in the Hungarian Parliament on October the 18<sup>th</sup> 1918, a declaration which was followed by a similar one made by the Slovak Juriga.<sup>8</sup> But the merit of the Romanian Central National Council doesn't reside solely in the fact that it indicated the path of the Romanians' political behavior relative to the evolution of events in Hungary. Responsibly assuming the governing exercise of the province, this body encouraged the multiplication of the centers of power by creating similar structures locally, an action meant to facilitate the institutionalization of Romanian power in Transylvania.<sup>9</sup>

With no intention to insist upon the succession of events, from inside the province or internationally, which led to the separation of Transylvania from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, I would like to make a remark on the fact that the transfer of the Romanians from Transylvania from the political and socio-cultural horizon of the Kingdom of Hungary

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<sup>5</sup> *Marele Război în memoria bănăţeană (1914–1919)*. Antology, edition, studies and notes by Valeriu Leu and Nicolae Bocşan. With the collaboration of Mihaela Bedecan and Ionela Moscovici, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012, p. 64-65.

<sup>6</sup> J. Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, University of Washington, Seattle and London, 1974, p. 139-143; Z. Boilă, *Memorii*, Cluj-Napoca, Biblioteca Apostrof, 2003, p. 23-24; 112.

<sup>7</sup> V. Moga, „Naţiunea în discursul politic românesc din Transilvania anului 1918”, in vol. *Problema Transilvaniei în discursul politic de la sfârşitul Primului Război Mondial*, coordinated by Valer Moga, Sorin Arhire, Cluj-Napoca, Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2009, p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Z. Boilă, *Memorii*, p. 71, 80, 84; M. Ruffini, *Storia dei romeni di Transilvania*, Torino, Libreria de „La Stampa”, 1942, p. 250.

<sup>9</sup> N. Brînzeu, *Memoriile unui preot bătrân*, edition, preface and notes by Pia Brînzeu, Timişoara, Ed. Marineasa, 2008, p. 253-255.

took place on the background of a high optimism generated by the perspective of cohabiting with their "blood brothers". But until all the Romanians could "taste" the benefits of living united under the same scepter, the problems which needed urgent solving.<sup>10</sup> The so necessary reconstruction of Transylvania imposed by the multiple damages and prejudices caused by the war was encumbered, among others, by the resistance of the old Austro-Hungarian power network, a resistance against the profound changes which began to take shape in the region. The Romanian seizure of the province, especially beyond the administrative and military delimitation stipulated in the provisions of Armistice Convention of Belgrade, was meant to completely antagonize the relationships between the institutions born within the Assembly in Alba Iulia, respectively the Cabinet from Bucharest and the political power in Budapest. Invoking the need to protect the province and even the center of Europe from the Bolshevik danger which began to take shape in the area, the Romanian political leaders didn't hesitate to resort to the force of arms in order to obtain the state configuration for which vicious diplomatic struggles were already taking place at the Paris Peace Conference. That is why, even after the capitulation of all the belligerent countries fighting for the Central Powers, the state of war continued in some parts of the old continent.<sup>11</sup>

The desire to obtain the recognition of borders as long as possible for Romania and to guarantee their safety, undoubtedly represented the main objective of the Romanian politicians in the post-war period. But at least an equal share of importance had to be given to the process of internal recovery of the country, to the identification of some solutions capable to help overcoming the various negative effects of the war and, a significant fact, to allow the state to be built on strong foundations, much more widespread, geographically and demographically. Hence, a coalition of the human potential was in order, for clearing off the deep marks that the long and harsh conflict had left upon the population, upon the territory and its resources. One of the Romanian institutions from Transylvania which not only remained inert to the great changes that took shape in those times but chose to play an active role in their evolution was the Church, in its double Transylvanian hypostasis: Greek-Catholic and Orthodox. Going through the

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<sup>10</sup> K. Hitchins, *România 1866-1947*, translation from English by George G. Potra and Delia Răzdolescu, București, Humanitas, 1994, p. 314.

<sup>11</sup> Z. Szász, „Revolutions and national movements after the collapse of the Monarchy (1918-1919)”, in vol. *History of Transylvania. Volume III. From 1830 to 1919*, edited by Zoltán Szász, New York, Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 790-793; G. E. Torrey, *Romania and World War I. A Collection of Studies*, Iași-Oxford-Portland, Center for Romanian Studies, 1998, p. 366-385.



harsh years of the war along with the population of the province, the disturbances of the normal course of life and the specific privations of such times, the two Churches were among the few Romanian institutions to be a part of the liability that the Romanian administration, whose foundations were being built then, took from the Hungarian state.<sup>12</sup> The preoccupation of the two ecclesiastic entities didn't consist throughout the war only in easing the spiritual wounds of the faithful ones, anguished by the scale of the conflict and by the great number of the victims that it produced. They were the ones which had to withstand some tenacious pressures which the politicians from Budapest had put on them and on the school system which they patronized, especially after the neighbour Romanian state officially became sworn enemy of the political-military group in which the Austro-Hungarian Empire was during the war.<sup>13</sup> Taking into account this general framework, the decision of the hierarchs from the two Churches to transform their vast networks of congregations and archpriestships into relays for transmitting the political messages of the recently established Romanian provincial authorities, the active involvement of the clergy in bringing into effect those instructions or organizing the national councils in the Transylvanian area should come as no surprise. One again synchronized with the evolution of the Romanian community which it served, the Greek-Catholic and the Orthodox Church from Transylvania transmitted clear messages to their faithful ones, indicating them that they should make a display of attachment and obedience towards the Romanian institutions which then tried to encompass in their authority the entire Transylvanian perimeter. The example of the behaviour was given by themselves, mainly by the hierarchies of the two Churches. Taking into account the vacancy of the two in Blaj and Sibiu, the bishops of the two Romanian Churches took upon themselves the role of megaphone for the messages meant to build loyalty among the flock towards the Romanian authorities which made efforts to institutionalize their power. Shortly after the Romanian Central National Council began its activity, the episcopal choirs of the two Romanian Churches positioned themselves firmly towards the activity of this organism, acknowledging its legality and legitimacy for representing the Romanian nation: "We acknowledge the Romanian National Council as envoy and political leader of the Romanian nation in Hungary and

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<sup>12</sup> A presentation of the situation of the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania during the war in V. Moga, „De la patriotismul dinastic la România Mare. Bisericile românești din Transilvania în tumultul politic al anilor 1914-1918”, in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, 15/II, 2011, p. 347-368.

<sup>13</sup> K. Hitchins, *România 1866-1947*, p. 303; *Histoire de la Transylvanie*, sous la direction de Béla Köpeczi, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992, p. 602-603.

Transylvania, feeling ourselves entitled and obliged – as faithful sons of our nation – to cooperate to the utmost of our power for the embodiment of our national aspirations”.<sup>14</sup> The introduction of mentioning the members of the new Romanian leadership structure at the liturgy symbolically marked the official reference to a new political authority. But this wasn't the only example of the Romanian hierarchs' rally to the new pole of political power which had set its headquarters in Arad. A lot of perseverance was needed in order to build a solid attachment towards the new institution. Only three days after the Romanian Central National Council enunciated the diplomatic note to the authorities from Budapest for its administrative and military authority over the 23 Romanian counties from Transylvania and over the areas mostly inhabited by Romanians from the Békés, Csanád and Ugocsa counties to be acknowledged, the bishops of the two Romanian Churches laid down and disseminated a new common declaration through which they announced that “along with our revered priesthood we salute with great warmth, we honour and support the action of the Romanian Central National Council, solely entitled to lead the national policy of the Romanian nation from Hungary and Transylvania”.<sup>15</sup> This was followed, obviously, by other similar manifestos, vouched not only by the members of the sees but also by the incumbents of inferior ecclesiastic offices.<sup>16</sup> Considering the hierarchs' determination to support the institutionalization

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<sup>14</sup> *Cultura Creștină*, VII, nr. 17-20/1918, p. 368-369. The adhesion is published on the day of celebrating the Saint Archangels Michael and Gabriel, being signed by the following bishops: Demetriu Radu (Oradea), Ioan I. Papp (Arad), Miron Cristea (Caransebeș), Valeriu Traian Frențiu (Lugoj) and Iuliu Hossu (Gherla).

<sup>15</sup> Arhivele Naționale, Serviciul Județean Alba [National Archives, Alba County Office], Fond *Mitropolia greco-catolică română de Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Metropolis of Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 5742/1918, f. 1r (next A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*) [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents].

<sup>16</sup> It was the case of the vicar capitular from Blaj, who, in November the 19<sup>th</sup> disseminated amongst the clergy and the believers of the archdiocese from Alba Iulia and Făgăraș a letter in which he analysed from the perspective of the Catholic Church dogmas the divine origin of the notions of freedom and equality among all the peoples of the world, presenting in the second part of the text the international context of those days which created the conditions for the implementation of the principle of peoples' self-determination. Vasile Suciuc encouraged the addressees to maintain the public order and to respect the right of property for all the inhabitants from Transylvania, to create councils and national guards and to show obedience towards the Romanian Central National Council and encouraged the priests to mention this political body in all the divine liturgies, where before the emperor and the apostolic king were mentioned. See A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 5742/1918, f. 5r-8v.

of Romanian power in Transylvania right from the beginning of the actions which led to the segregation *de facto* of the province from the dualistic Monarchy, it should come as no surprise the firmness with which the same hierarchs encouraged the flock to answer the call to arms launched by the Governing Council in the winter of 1918-1919 to eliminate the duality of administrative and military power of the province, imposed by the Armistice Convention of Belgrade, which was mentioned before.<sup>17</sup> That is why, from the pulpit of both Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Churches echoed the urge of the hierarchs through which the faithful ones were encouraged to follow the order of enrolment emitted by the high province government.<sup>18</sup>

Even if we limit ourselves at remembering these examples only, the contribution of the hierarchs from the two Romanian Churches at building Greater Romania on solid foundations is obvious. A question related to the historian's honesty is in order at this point in the report: when did the people from the top of the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania act sincerely: was it when they had put their signature on the "Declaration of Romanian's fidelity towards Hungary" or when they transmitted supportive messages and were actively involved in the implementation of the measures adopted by the Romanian authorities of the province?<sup>19</sup> The gesture from the beginning of the year 1917 when no less than 176 Romanian personalities (secular and ecclesiastical) vouched through their own signature the attachment towards the Hungarian state, underlining the concord that existed between the Romanian and the Hungarian nation in the same motherland could be misunderstood if one doesn't take into account the context in which that document appeared.<sup>20</sup> At the mentioned date, in the international debate the idea that the different nations who cohabited in the Austro-Hungarian Empire should be given, at the end of the war, the right to decide freely their political and national-state future intruded itself upon people's minds. Supported by the United States of America, a world power which at that time had built the image of a consolidated and functional democracy, the respective political doctrine rapidly won the sympathy of

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<sup>17</sup> *Unirea*, XXIX, nr. 38/1919, p. 2; nr. 50/1919, p. 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Initially, the chief of the resort of Cults and Public Instruction from the Governing Council (Consiliul Dirigent), Vasile Goldiș, sent a letter in January the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1919, in which all the church authorities were asked to advise the believers to obey the given order: *Gazeta Oficială. Publicată de Consiliul Dirigent al Transilvaniei, Banatului și Ținuturilor românești din Ungaria*, nr. 88/1919, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> B. Köpeczi *Histoire de la Transylvanie*, p. 603-604.

<sup>20</sup> D. Suci, *Anul 1918 în Europa Centrală și Răsăriteană. Evoluția ideii de Europă unită. Perspectivă și retrospectivă istorică*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut, 2003, p. 36-38.

the European peoples for which the prospect of having a state of their own was opening up, but the same idea had the power to bring panic among the political establishment from the two poles of power that ensured the leadership of the dual Monarchy. This generated the Budapest politicians' initiative to require a public display of loyalty from the representatives of the nations which they patronized. Besides, when the respective declaration had been published, the odds seem to be in favour for the Central Powers.

Despite the high enthusiasm which animated the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Churches from Transylvania at the dawn of the Greater Romania, different prospects were to be opened for each of them in their own motherland.<sup>21</sup> Although it functioned for more than half a century according to a different fundamental steering programme than the one guiding the internal life of the Orthodox Church from the Old Kingdom the Transylvanian Orthodox Church had numerous reasons to look optimistically ahead. A hierarch's accession placed before the war in the power structures of the Church in the office of metropolitan Primate decisively contributed to the unification of the various institutional traditions of the Orthodox Church from the different regions of the young Romanian state, following the principles of Şaguna's "Organic Statute", as long as the proportion of the Orthodox believers in relation to the entire population of the country offered the Church an undeniable and comforting first place in the constellation of confessions in the new Romania. However, more important than the quantitative was the status whose beneficiary was the Orthodox Church in the Old Kingdom and which the Church didn't conceive to abandon after the enlargement of the borders of the Romanian state. The co-optation of the Orthodox confession component in the definition of the modern Romanian identity gradually generated an intimate relationship between the state and the Church. Being the symbol of the good Romanian nationality, the Orthodox Church became in time the beneficiary of a privileged treatment from the state, but conformed itself to a strong tutelage from the state, with all the negative consequences that such a status brings. The confessional pluralization emerged after the formation of Greater Romania made the political authorities re-evaluate the bases of the relationship between the state and the various cults which began to function inside it, the cohabitation involving the necessity of a progressive adaptation

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<sup>21</sup> O. Bârlea, „La Chiesa romana. Il cammino verso l'unità”, in vol. *Fede e martirio. Le Chiese orientali cattoliche nell'Europa del Novecento. Atti del Convegno di storia ecclesiastica contemporanea (Città del Vaticano, 22-24 ottobre 1998)*, a cura di Aleksander Rebernik, Gianpaolo Rigotti, Michel Van Parys, O.S.B., Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003, p. 110-111.

process from both sides, the state being asked to respect the traditions which created identities and to relate to the entire confessional spectrum with no *partis-pris* and in exchange the cults were bound to accept the numerical superiority of the Orthodox confession and implicitly its privileged position motivated by some old customs of institutional interaction as well as the political-symbolic ideology which enveloped, as I was saying, the respective denomination.<sup>22</sup> In this complicated confessional scenery, the Greek-Catholic Church found with difficulty the place and role which it believed it deserved in the Romanian state. Firstly because of the fact that its presence alone was proof to the fact that the Romanian ethnic bloc wasn't confessionally unitary. The confessional division was seen as a sign of national vulnerability, given that the Romanians came to be part of a unique territorial-state structure. Secondly, the Romanians' political unification itself, at the end of the first World War was, surprisingly, considered to be a premise for achieving opposite confessional finalities. More specifically, under the cover of the rounded Romanian state there were two confessional discourses which proliferated: firstly, the Orthodox discourse which stated that because the national ideal had been achieved, the Greek-Catholic Church had finished its historic mission, its existence basically being useless in the future.<sup>23</sup> This concept which turned the Greek-Catholic Church into an instrument for political and national purposes found the opposition in an idea which caught strong roots among the united Romanians community, which started from the hypothesis that the cultural and educational pressure being eliminated, pressure which the authorities from Budapest had exerted upon the Church before, there was now a background for a harmonious development of the Greek-Catholic believers' institutions and religious life, in a state from which they expected if not a friendly treatment, at least an equidistant one towards the two Romanian Churches.<sup>24</sup> Finally, we mustn't overlook one of the *pièces de résistance* of the ideology on

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<sup>22</sup> O. Gillet, „Orthodoxie, nation et ethnicité en Roumanie au XXe siècle: un problème ecclésiologique et politique”, in vol. *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Maria Crăciun, Ovidiu Ghitta, Cluj University Press, f.l., 1995, p. 348-350; L. Iacob, *Biserica dominantă și egală îndreptățire a cultelor*, Arad, Ed. Arhidiecezană, 1938, p. 3-10; 34 and the following.

<sup>23</sup> O. Bârlea, „Biserica română unită între cele două războaie mondiale”, in vol. *Biserica Română Unită – două sute cincizeci de ani de istorie*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Viața Creștină, 1998, p. 91; N. Gudea, „Reflecții privind relația Stat-Biserică – o abordare teologică greco-catolică”, in vol. *Theological Doctrines on the Ideal Church-State Relation*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000, p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> C. Ghișa, „The Greek-Catholic Discourse of Identity in the InterWar Period: The Relation between the Nation and People's Religious Confession”, in *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Historia*, volume 57, number 2, December 2012, p. 60.

which the pre-war Romanian nationalism had been founded according to which the affiliation to the Orthodox confession was a pledge for a strong Romanity and for a national fidelity.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the Orthodox Church was seen as bearer of the quintessence of the Romanian nationality, the institution which significantly contributed to shaping the profile of the Romanian state identity and for its great merits the state made no delay repaying it, by granting it the constitutional recognition as “the dominant religion of the Romanian state”. Despite these not quite encouraging premises, hopes concerning the future of the Greek-Catholic Church in Greater Romania were high. The starting point, the stabilizing principle was considered to be written in the resolution of the Assembly in Alba Iulia, at item 3, paragraph 2: “equal rightfulness and absolute autonomous freedom for all the confessions inside the state”. Therefore, equal rights and the possibility of an independent management, with no interference from the civil power (in the ecclesiastic patrimony, in the educational institutions patronized by the Church), were the two great desiderata which the mentioned document specifically stated. Succession in the legislative horizon based on the principle of confessional equality was therefore one of the major objectives of the Greek-Catholic Church after 1918.<sup>26</sup>

Without precisely knowing how difficult was to be the path of cohabitation inside a preponderantly Orthodox state accustomed, as I was saying, with the reflexes of it being treated if not as a state religion, than at least visibly treated with bias, the Greek-Catholic Romanians, as did the great majority of the citizens of Greater Romania, were very confident about their future in the Romanian state. Despite the fact that, at the time, there were also some reserved opinion, the voice that was mostly heard was the voice of exhilaration. The general national enthusiasm in those days had the power to take the sting out of the deep wounds that the war had left upon the society, but it also had the power to make some weaknesses go unnoticed, weaknesses which marked the governance of the new state. But, as the state of euphoria marking the new beginning melted away, the cracks in the state administration began to emerge gradually, but there were also

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<sup>25</sup> H.-C. Maner, „Kirchen in Rumänien: Faktoren demokratischer Stabilität in der Zwischenkriegszeit? Zum Verhältnis von orthodoxer, römisch-katholischer und griechisch-katholischer Kirche“, in vol. *Religion im Nationalstaat zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918-1939. Polen-Tschechoslowakei-Ungarn-Rumänien*, Herausgegeben von Hans-Christian Maner und Martin Schulze Wessel, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002, p. 114-115.

<sup>26</sup> See a detailed presentation in L. Turcu, „Relația stat-Biserică în România în primii ani după Marea Unire. Perspectiva Bisericii greco-catolice“, in vol. *Studii de istorie*, vol. II, editors: Constantin Bușe, Ionel Căndea, Brăila, Mezeul din Brăila, Ed. Istros, 2013, p. 367-406.

complaints regarding the principles supported by a part of the political class to guide the process of legislative recovery, highly necessary in the new post-war context. Even before the elaboration of this general regulation, a specific category of manifestations were a valuable indicator of the differences made in the treatment applied by the state authorities upon the two Romanian confessions. I'm talking about the official holidays.

Marking the public life with festive manifestations in the post-war period had not only the designation to loosen up the society after a long period of calamities and extended privations, but it also shed light on the national rebirth and transmitted confidence in the process of turning Lesser Romania into Greater Romania. It seemed as though more than never the potential that this kind of events had in emphasizing the national unity, the solidarity and the reconciliation, in coagulating millions of new citizens of the Romanian state around the same values had to be capitalized on.<sup>27</sup> But, surprisingly, these festive times represented, as we shall see, occasions for tension and dissatisfaction for a part of the post-war Romanian society.

Even before the union between Transylvania and Romania was ratified by the forum of the Peace Conference in Paris, the rulers of Transylvania adopted measures so that the Romanian sovereigns' names should be mentioned during the liturgical celebrations and the days with special historical significance for the country which adopted them should be marked in Transylvania as well.<sup>28</sup> The fact that not all the ecclesiastic authorities carried forward such a disposition appeared from a document of the Department of Cults and Public Instruction from the Governing Council, from the beginning of March 1920.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, more than an year after the Romanians from Transylvania had declared the province as united with the Kingdom of Romania, the official holidays didn't have their proper celebration from all the new citizens of the country. From the same source we find out about the zeal of some "organs of the public services" to force

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<sup>27</sup> A theoretical presentation of the role played by holidays in the modern societies in S. Nicoară, „Metamorfozele sărbătorii sub impactul sensibilităților moderne (secolele XVI-XIX)”, in *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, IV, nr. 1 (7), January-June 2005, p. 111-132.

<sup>28</sup> The circular letter emitted in Sibiu, December the 31<sup>st</sup> 1918, by the Department of Cults and Public Instruction by the Governing Council invited all the Church authorities of the united territories to take the necessary actions so that “in al the divine, public and particular services, where the old traditions had put special prayers for the peace, health, and long rule of the monarch, to be mentioned, in the future, the name of his Majesty, our glorious king, Ferdinand the 1<sup>st</sup>”: *Gazeta Oficială*, nr. 5/1919, p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents,] file nr. 1160/1920, f. 1r.

the priests into officiating liturgies or to bring to account those who did not obey the high order. "However justifiable the patriotic indignation of our organs, it is exclusively within the competence of the ecclesiastic authorities to establish for these occasions the corresponding liturgy" notified the document signed by the chief-secretary of resort, Onisifor Ghibu. Moreover, the ecclesiastic institutions were capable to transmit pacification messages to their faithful ones where they resorted to (verbal or physical) aggression towards priests belonging to other confessions: "They should forbear themselves in such situations from any agitations against the other confessions and to stay away from any direct or indirect interference concerning the cult matters of any other confessions", was the indication that the emitter of the document stated, adding that whoever wasn't willing to respect the official dispositions regarding the marking of national holiday by liturgies was liable to be brought to account "and for the possible neglect to be punished with the utmost strictness".

A brief analysis of the content of this disposition is entitled to unfold its profound significations. Most likely, the respective document didn't consider the resorts of all the confessions that were active in Transylvania at that time. It was more probably addressed to the two Romanian Churches, bearing in mind that it mentions a few times "the priests of other confessions" who hadn't obeyed the legal dispositions about marking the national holidays by liturgies, as well as mentioning "the patriotic indignation" which led some men of law to take action in this matter. When the respective document had been emitted not all the citizens of Romania had passed the test of accommodation in the new motherland in which they had been placed. As we know, the Hungarian community from Transylvania reluctantly admitted the prospect of belonging to another state other than Hungary, after the war had ended. The strong international protests that the representatives of this country carried out as soon as the possibility of the deconstruction of Saint Stephen's Kingdom became visible were joined by the Hungarian hierarchs of the different confessions from the province. The bishops of the Latin dioceses from Transylvania dispatched alarmist memoirs to the Nunciature from Vienna; as did the representatives of the Calvinist community who launched public protests in which they presented very gloomily the future of the Hungarian confessional groups if the deconstruction *de jure* of Greater Hungary was to be confirmed.<sup>30</sup> Many European capitals and other cities were informed by the Transylvanian religious leaders (among them being the bishop of the Transylvanian

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<sup>30</sup> A. Vaida-Voevod, *Memorii*, vol. II, preface, edition, notes and comments by Alexandru Șerban, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1995, p. 58; 60.



diocese, Gusztáv Károly Majláth, the Unitarian bishop József Ferencz, the Calvinist superintendent Károly Nagy) about the imminent persecutions – they thought – which the Romanians would trigger upon the confessional minorities.<sup>31</sup> Hence, a long series of accusations and denigrations appeared against the Romanians, presented as a people who would attempt on the fundamental rights of ethnic-confessional alterities.<sup>32</sup> The lack of reconciliation of the Hungarian community with the situation in which it had been put by the Trianon peace treaty was also materialized in the Transylvanian hierarchs' refusal to perform the oath of allegiance towards the sovereign of the Romanian state. Seen as an act of disobedience and rebellion against the new center of political power, the respective episode was ended in the spring of 1921, when the bishops of the minorities made the required oath (although the dissatisfaction for diminishing the agrarian property and implicitly the revenues that the properties generated, the dissatisfaction towards the agrarian reform, towards the policies applied to the educational field, towards the plans of adjusting or even dissolving some dioceses hadn't been dissipated) along with the promise to respect the laws that governed the country.<sup>33</sup> On the occasion of this ceremony, the two bishops who made the oath (Gusztáv Károly Majláth and Gyula Glattfelder) handed the sovereign of the country many memoirs in which they required that the Catholic Church from Transylvania should have the recognition of the rights that it had benefited in the Hungarian state: autonomous organization, financial assistance from the state, the intact preservation of the confessional educational system, the acquittance from the expropriation of the lands held by the Church and by the Catholic Status.<sup>34</sup> The implications of the Roman-Catholic Transylvanian bishopric's gesture are important from many points of view: firstly, it opened the path towards officializing the relationship between the Transylvanian branch of the Roman-Catholic Church and the Romanian state, which proceeded at the transfer of the sums which represented the wages, retroactively, beginning

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 64, 93; A. Stan, *Iuliu Maniu. Naționalism și democrație. Biografia unui mare român*, București, Saeculum I.O., 1997, p. 95-96; I. Georgescu, „Momente din viața Bisericii unite în ultimii zece ani”, in vol. *Transilvania, Banatul, Crișana, Maramureșul 1918-1928*, vol. II, București, Cultura Națională, 1929, p. 796.

<sup>32</sup> *Istoria românilor, vol. VIII. România întregită (1918-1940)*, coordinated by Ioan Scurtu, București, Ed. Enciclopedică, 2003, p. 66.

<sup>33</sup> *Cultura Creștină*, IX, nr. 7-9/1920, p. 217; *Unirea*, XXXI, nr. 16/1921, p. 3; Z. Străjanu, „Culte minoritare în Transilvania”, in vol. *Transilvania, Banatul, Crișana, Maramureșul 1918-1928*, vol. II, București, Cultura Națională, 1929, p. 840; M. Nóda, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania în perioada interbelică*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Studium, 2008, p. 32.

<sup>34</sup> M. Nóda, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania*, p. 32.

with July the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1920.<sup>35</sup> Then, we mustn't neglect the modification which appeared in the political behaviour of the Hungarian community, by the decision of its leaders to abandon the passive resistance attitude, enacted soon after December the 1<sup>st</sup> 1918, towards the Romanian authorities and its replacement with an active presence on the Romanian political scene, by founding the Hungarian Party form Romania, at the end of 1922, an organization which began the long battle for achieving the right to self-government in the regions where the Hungarians represented the majority of the population.<sup>36</sup> The gesture of the Latin Catholic episcopal choir has to be linked with the clarification of the international status for the provinces segregated from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, a circumstance which contributed to the clarification of the diplomatic policy of the Holy See towards this area.<sup>37</sup> Taking into account this entire chronology, the gesture made by the priests of some non-Romanian communities, which the presented document speaks about, to not mark the festive dates from the official calendar of the Romanian state by liturgies is easier to understand. What was surprising at that time was the behaviour that the public authorities had displayed on the official holidays towards the two Romanian Churches. More specifically, I'm referring to the decision of the local authorities to join the liturgies officiated by the Orthodox Church with the occasion of national holidays. The preferential presence of the state authorities at the religious ceremonies officiated by the Orthodox prelates was perceived as an affront to the Greek-Catholic Church. It's not difficult to identify the main resort of such a behaviour from the state dignitaries. It primarily belongs to the patronage that the Orthodox Church, which had the relationship presented above with the state, had exerted before the war upon a series of events of this kind, a position which the Church aimed to hold thenceforth in the newly formed state. But this pretence was vigorously contested by the representatives of the Greek-Catholic Church, who couldn't conceive a discriminatory relationship of the state with one of the two Romanian confessions. For a better understanding of the entire issue, it's worth following the evolution of some practical examples.

In May the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1919, the bishop Demetriu Radu spoke to the Governing Council Presidency with the following purpose: "the regulation of the assistance of the public authorities at the liturgies, based on the

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<sup>35</sup> Z. Străjanu, *Culte minoritare în Transilvania*, p. 840.

<sup>36</sup> M. Nóda, *Biserica romano-catolică din Transilvania*, p. 37; I. Scurtu, Ghe. Buzatu, *Istoria românilor în secolul XX (1918-1948)*, București, Ed. Paideia, 1999, p. 36-37.

<sup>37</sup> M. Conway, *Catholic politics in Europe 1918-1945*, London and New York, Routledge, 1997, p. 2-4.

principle of confessional equality established at Alba Iulia".<sup>38</sup> Hence, shortly before the official celebration for the first time in Transylvania of the National Day of the Romanian Kingdom, the most visible hierarch at that time in the Greek-Catholic Church felt the need to require the clarification of the attitude of the authorities from the province towards the liturgical services that were to be celebrated on that special occasion. There are two things worth remembering from the solicitation made by the high prelate. Firstly, the addressee: the Governing Council Presidency. The appeal to the respective regional ruling forum was obvious bearing in mind that it was under its authority that the territories segregated from Hungary had been placed at the end of 1918. But the person leading it wasn't just one of the most important politicians of the Romanian community in Transylvania, but also one of the sons of the Greek-Catholic Church from Transylvania. Under these circumstances, the intervention that the bishop from Oradea solicited to Iuliu Maniu takes new additional valences. Secondly, it's worth remembering the principle which guided the high prelate's appeal which was none other than the principle of confession equality agreed upon at the Assembly in Alba Iulia, a reunion which availed for the Romanians in Transylvania the enunciation of some general norms which they wanted to be present at the foundation of the functioning of the state, state whose citizens they declared themselves at that moment. Considering these two aspects of vital importance, bishop Radu's request was very obvious, in terms of the legislative body in which the Transylvanian province was at that time. But, surprisingly, the high hierarch's petition wasn't given any answer until the end of February, 1920. This reason, added to the fact that "inferior state organs became to make offensive dispositions towards the principle from Alba Iulia" made bishop Radu to make another intervention to the leadership of the same "government" and summoned it to end the abuses that were being carried out locally. Demetriu Radu believed that the state shouldn't force it's functionaries to take part during the festive days at the religious services of another confession other than the one they belonged to, thus respecting the "intangible principle of freedom of consciousness" through which some regrettable situations in which Greek-Catholic officials were forced by the law to take part in the religious services performed by Orthodox prelates could be avoided. Starting from respecting this fundamental right, the governors were insistently advised to find solutions that would please both Romanian Churches concerning the state functionaries' presence at the

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<sup>38</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 2363/1921, f. 5r.

church services as well as “the order of presentation of the Romanian confessions before the high authorities of the state”.

The fact that neither this intervention of the high prelate from Oradea didn't have the expected effect is shown by the fact that after his unexpected disappearance at the end of 1920,<sup>39</sup> the vicar capitular of the diocese from the western part of the country triggered a wake-up call concerning this delicate problem.<sup>40</sup> Shortly after the celebrations from May the 10<sup>th</sup> that year, Florian Stan disappointedly addressed the metropolitan Vasile Suciu, bringing to his attention the fact that although he had announced in good time the local authorities about the liturgy that was going to take place in honour of that holiday “we were ignored as before and our church was empty”. Because the situation could no longer be tolerated, the canon priest Iacob Radu was given the task to formulate and to send an address to the Prefect of the department of Bihor, announcing that as a protest to the local authorities' attitude, the representatives of the Greek-Catholic Church were going to be absent from the reception given in honour of that respective day. The answer received from the government's field representative explained the fact that the reason of every official's absence from the liturgy performed in the Greek-Catholic cathedral in town was caused by the telegraphic order emitted by the General Directorate of Internal Affairs from Cluj by which the civil and military local authorities were announced by their obligation to honour the Day of the Kingdom by being present at the religious ceremonies from the Orthodox churches.<sup>41</sup> Stunned by this answer, the leader of the diocese from Oradea during the vacancy of the see addressed to the prefect (a former student of his), protesting “to the utmost extent against forcing our faithful ones to take part without preliminary leave to other divine services other than their own Church, as authorities, as functionaries or as students”.<sup>42</sup> Florian Stan didn't

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<sup>39</sup> The Bishop Demetriu Radu was (alongside the Ministry of Justice from that time, Dimitrie Greceanu, and the senator Spirea Gheorghiu) a victim of the bomb assault on the Senate of Romania, on December the 8<sup>th</sup>, 1920, arranged by Max Goldstein. See I. Georgescu, *Un martir al datoriei către țară: episcopul Demetriu Radu*, The Institute of Graphic Art and Publishing House „Glasul Bucovinei”, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 2363/1921, f. 1r-v.

<sup>41</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 2363/1921, f. 3r.

<sup>42</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 2363/1921, f.4r.

end just in expressing his displeasure at the local authorities. He wrote to the minister of Cults and Arts as well, vigorously condemning the offence which the local authorities deliberately brought upon the Greek-Catholic Church: "Minister, we're not scrutinizing the deep secrets of politics...but we know, feel and support one thing, that the united Romanian Church, Șincai's, Clain's, Petru Maior's Church and the Church of other apostles of the Romanian nation, who, like no others, and we emphasize this with pride, laboured at the awakening of our national consciousness, at forging and cementing the Romania of today, can't be treated as enemy of the Romanian state nor can it be moved in the shade of the Orthodox Church...". Florin Stan needed to tell to the high dignitary from Bucharest that nowhere else did the Greek-Catholic Church suffer more image prejudices as in Oradea, the only city of the new Romania where at that time there were two Romanian bishoprics but the prestige of the two ecclesiastic institutions wasn't equal, as the canon priest vicar capitular wanted to explain: "taking into account that the united bishopric, compared with the Orthodox one which is newly born, has a glorious past, full of virtues and is 150 years old, we find its disregard more humiliating and harmful". Based on these arguments, Florian Stan required from the high dignitary from Bucharest a "quick remedy", the more so as the Greek-Catholic believers' indignation was deep because of the situation were placed, even though they were "sons of the same blood and nation, the most peace-loving and obedient".

After he had presented to the metropolitan all these endeavours carried out around the local authorities and those from Bucharest, Florian Stan solicited to the high prelate to make the necessary efforts in order to mend matters ("for any solution to the fearlessness and impetuosity of the non-united brothers, which know no boundaries"). Feeling the need to emphasize the exceptional situation in which the bishopric from Oradea was, deeply dishonoured by the authorities' unjust behaviour, the future bishop of Axiopolis advisingly concluded: "Keeping quiet and bearing further humiliation would mean conceding defeat"

But, was the city which lay on the Fast Cris̃ the only one in which the local officials avoided the Greek-Catholic churches on official days? The answer is most probably no. The testimonies from that period which were preserved convincingly demonstrate that it was more a matter of a generalized practice of the civil and military authorities from Transylvania towards the Uniate Church on the occasion of those festive days. The attitude of neglecting the Greek-Catholic Church wasn't boiled down only to the absence of the local officials from the religious services performed by its priests on the National Day and legal holidays. There were other

occasions as well, such as church consecrations, the inauguration of charity edifices patronized by the Uniate Church or manifestations dedicated to anniversaries and commemorations, on which the state officials often chose to be absent.<sup>43</sup> At the antipode of such behaviour towards the moments of feast of the Greek-Catholic Church was the attitude of the same dignitaries towards the Orthodox Church. Moreover, after the war the politicians chose to deliberately support the intentions of expanding the institutional branches of the Orthodox Church in areas where this confession didn't hold the primacy from the point of view of numerical representation. This is how new Orthodox episcopal centres of power appeared on the Transylvanian confessional map: in Oradea, in 1920, where there was a long tradition of functioning of a vicarship-like institution, which underlay the edification of a new bishopric so quickly after the war; in Cluj, in 1921, plans being made for a bishopric in Maramureş and another one in Timișoara<sup>44</sup>. In the logic of this framework-plan of supporting the Orthodox Church was the construction of churches in areas with a lot of Greek-Catholics. For example, for Satu Mare the authorities from Bucharest planned, shortly after the war ended, to build an imposing cult edifice for the least numerous community which belonged to that confession. For starting the building program the liberal government provided in the budget of the Ministry of Cults and Arts the sum of 1 million lei, taking upon itself the task of supporting the annual building costs of the new church.<sup>45</sup> But, until the completion of that respective edifice the local authorities didn't hesitate to take part on the occasion of the festive days (for example the Queen Mary's anniversary in 1921) at the religious service from the Orthodox chapel from the city even though the city which lay on the Someș river had a Greek-Catholic church and a numerous community, estimated at the beginning of the third decade of the last century at 6-7000 faithful ones.<sup>46</sup>

With such a treatment, if not offensive at least neglectful towards the Greek-Catholic Church, what kind of actions unfolded its hierarchs in

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<sup>43</sup> Which happened, for example, at the opening of the Orphanage „Principesa Ileana”, in the fall of 1921, in Lugoj, on the occasion of the sanctification of the Church from Spini, by the metropolitan Vasile Suciu or in other situations whose inventory I don't intend to give here.: *Unirea*, XXXI, nr. 47/1921, p. 2, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Șt. Meteș, „Biserica ortodoxă română din Transilvania în cei din urmă zece ani”, in vol. *Transilvania, Banatul, Crișana, Maramureșul 1918-1928*, vol. II, Cultura Națională, Bucharest 1929, p. 771-773; M. Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii ortodoxe române, vol. 3 (secolele XIX și XX)*, București, Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii ortodoxe române, 1994, p. 439-440.

<sup>45</sup> *Unirea*, XXXIII, nr. 45/1923, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Unirea*, XXXI, nr. 48/1921, p. 3.

order to get over that existing situation? Referring strictly to the matter of the authorities' attitude towards the religious ceremonies officiated in the Greek-Catholic churches at the official celebrations, it's worth remembering that shortly after Florian Stan communicated in Blaj the case from Oradea and put the metropolitan up to date with the interventions that he made himself in this matter, the archdiocesan synod from June the 22-23<sup>th</sup> 1921 formulated in turn its position towards that respective matter.<sup>47</sup> During the fourth meeting of this reunion, the synodal parents, faithful to the principle of "parity amongst all the confessions in the state, a principle fixed by the law in force and proclaimed by the Great National Assembly from December 1<sup>st</sup> 1918", formulated a protest "against any tendency to create on our Church's account a situation inferior to that of the Romanian Greek-Oriental Church. We demand no privilege but at the same time we protest against the creation of a privileged situation, which offended our Church on the account of another Church, whatever that Church might be", added the archdiocesan priesthood summoned at the conference.<sup>48</sup> The subject was on the agenda of the episcopal conference which took place in the country's capital on July the 4<sup>th</sup>, the bishops endorsing the point of view of the archdiocesan synod, consequently sending a letter of protest to the Ministry of Cults and Arts. It seems that this government resort shortly transmitted (July the 10<sup>th</sup>, 1921) to the Ministry of Internal Affairs the united hierarchs' letter, bringing to notice the fact that "on the national holidays the civil authorities totally disregard the Greek-Catholic Church and don't invite its representatives to take part in the different solemnities", consequently demanding a regulation, as shortly as possible, concerning the local authorities' participation at the religious ceremonies caused by national solemnities "in a satisfying manner for both Romanian Churches".<sup>49</sup> The suggested solution from the Ministry of Cults and Arts was that the local authorities "should participate, if possible, *in corpore* at the religious ceremonies of all the confessions from the city, first at the Orthodox Church, then at the other important Churches and definitely at the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church".<sup>50</sup> As the participation *in corpore* of the local officials was difficult to materialize concretely, the same ministry document allowed the

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<sup>47</sup> The context of that synod, its purposes, the debates and the decisions that were made in L. Turcu, *Arludiezeza greco-catolică de Alba Iulia și Făgăraș în timpul păstoririi mitropolitului Vasile Suciu (1920-1935)*, Ph.D Thesis, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, p. 479-501.

<sup>48</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 2411/1921, f. 446r.

<sup>49</sup> *Unirea*, XXXI, nr. 32/1921, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Unirea*, XXXI, nr. 36/1921, p. 1.

local authorities the possibility to “send to all (the cults – A/N) an official delegation so that the state should be represented in all the confessions, first considering both Romanian Churches: the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholic Church”. The Ministry, which was under the leadership of Constantin Argetoianu at that time transmitted, at the beginning of September, 1921, to all the prefects of the Transylvanian departments an order by which it roughly criticized the local authorities' behaviour towards the Greek-Catholic Church: “this procedure is capable of awakening entitled susceptibilities, of disrupting, in the detriment of the higher national cause, the fine relationships that the Romanian citizens split between the two confessions had up until now”.<sup>51</sup> The high ministry provision cleared the fact that the contempt for the Greek-Catholic Church had happened “with no intention from the higher authorities” and the government field representatives and all the local officials were informed that “the Greek-Catholic Church will enjoy in the future, as now, at any occasion, the same rights and favors as the Orthodox Church”.

However, the debate concerning the role that the two Romanian Churches had to have at the festivities on the occasion of official holidays surpassed the strictly institutional framework. A good occasion for extensive discussions was given by the outline of a new constitutional profile of the country, when in the enunciated projects and principles the respective topic had also been present. Dealing with the matter of the desirable relationship between different confessions and the state in the text of the future fundamental document, the Church history professor from the Faculty of Cernăuți, Romulus Câdea, believed that being a national Church, the Orthodox Church had to be given a series of privileges, such as: “the king's coronation, the royal prices' baptism and to perform weddings in the reigning house. Our Church will always lead the national and religious festivities”<sup>52</sup> Of course, not all the opinions in this matter were unanimous. The constitution project elaborated in the name of the Romanian National Party by Romul Boilă projected a different light over the principles which referred to the cults, inside of the country's new constitutional act.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 3655/1921, f. 9v.

<sup>52</sup> The entire argumentation in R. Câdea, „Organizația bisericească în Constituție”, in vol. *Constituția din 1923 în dezbaterile contemporanilor*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 1990, p. 476-495.

<sup>53</sup> R. Boilă, „Principiile Constituției noi”, in vol. *Constituția din 1923 în dezbaterile contemporanilor*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 1990, p. 533-550. See also *Idem*, *Anteproiect de Constituție pentru statul român lărgit, cu o scurtă expunere de motive*, Cluj, Tipografia Națională, 1921, p. 12-13.



Regarding the celebration of the religious services on the National Days, Boilă believed that it should take place in one of the two Romanian Churches, the decisive criteria being the number of faithful ones from that respective town.

The Constitution of the new state was the fundamental normative act but it had a character too general for allowing to deal with all the details concerning the different cults' relationships with the Romanian state or the confessions' way of functioning. The clerical and secular Greek-Catholic elite's hope that the recognition for the Uniate Church by the fundamental text adopted in 1923 of the same quality (but not the same status) admitted for the Orthodox Church as a "Romanian Church", would end the differences in the state's treatment towards the two confessions was quickly shattered. The opening of the law file for the general regime of the minority cults generate strong debates regarding the outline of their functional framework and the identification of their rights and duties inside the Romanian state. In the numerous projects elaborated by the resort Ministry along the third decade of the last century there have been stipulations regarding the attitude that the Romanian authorities had to adopt towards the religious ceremonies performed on festive National Days. The first project of the respective law contained in article 10 a statement which was at least incomplete concerning this matter. Concretely, that item stated that "all the cults are in duty bond to officiate liturgies (*Te Deum*) on national holidays and on the reigning Family's celebrations. The number and the day of those celebrations were to be established by the government".<sup>54</sup> In the comment elaborated by the Greek-Catholic episcopal forum around the respective law project, an amendment for the respective article was formulated. The explanatory note that the united bishops wanted to make was that the public functionaries had to have the freedom to take part at the liturgies officiated by the Church whose members they were.<sup>55</sup> Until the first elaborated project under Alexandru Lapedatu's ministry, the Greek-Catholic hierarchs' request regarding the religious ceremonies was maintained in the terms presented above. In fact, the normative text version

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<sup>54</sup> Arhivele Naționale, Serviciul Județean Alba [National Archives, Alba County Office], Fond *Mitropolia greco-catolică română de Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, Blaj. Arhiva generală. Acte inventariate*, [Fund of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Metropolis of Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, Blaj. General Archive. Recorded documents], file nr. 4147/1934, vol. I, f. 151v (next as A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Arhiva generală. Acte inventariate*) [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Archive. Recorded documents].

<sup>55</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Arhiva generală. Acte inventariate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Archive. Recorded documents], file nr. 4147/1934, vol. I, f. 169r.

submitted for review did not bring any important news on the matter. However, in the stated comment, the Greek-Catholic bishop college considered as appropriate to recommend that the text of the law would clearly specify that "the divine services in these celebrations will be held in the churches of both Romanian denominations" on the grounds that the Constitution recognized the national character of the two Romanian churches and their role in the celebration of religious ceremonies had to be sanctioned by a law article, and not by a regulation or ministerial order, "however well-intentioned that may be". Moreover, the amendment introduced exactly during the time allocated to discussions on the legislation project of that paragraph in the sense that 'at the celebrations joint with common processions the order laid down in Article 18 of this law will be kept', i. e. to prioritize the Orthodox denomination in festive moments was flatly rejected on the ground that "the laws of our Church definitely stop any divine communication (*communicatio in sacris*) with any other cult". The point of view of the Greek-Catholic Church in the same issue was repeated in the extensive memoir sent to the Ministry of resort before the bill of the cults was submitted to the Parliament for debate, in early 1926. The united hierarchs took advantage of the opportunity to emphasize that the text of the law should clarify the exact role of the Greek-Catholic Church in the festivities marking the national holidays or anniversaries of the Royal household, given the recognition by the Constitution of its national character. The request was based on the experience from recent years, when the Greek-Catholic Church was placed "in a situation of inferiority to the Orthodox Church, even where - as our bishopric offices - the most elementary sense of justice and equity claims that (this - A/N) would not happen again".<sup>56</sup> Shortly before entering the parliamentary procedure for debate and approval, the text of the bill had been subjected to a final review by a committee presided by none other than Patriarch Miron Cristea.<sup>57</sup> Among the amendments to the bill by this working group was one on the article which defines the duty of all religious denominations to hold services on the occasion of national and dynastic holidays. More specifically, the addition that was made mentioned that through the enforcement of the cult law "the cases in which the state religious ceremonies will be officiated in the churches of cults other than the Orthodox cult" an idea that assimilated the Orthodoxy to another official denomination of the state, holding

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<sup>56</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Arhiva generală. Acte inventariate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj, General Archive. Recorded documents], file nr. 4147/1934, vol. I, f. 295r-296r.

<sup>57</sup> *Unirea*, XXXVI, nr. 4/1926, p. 1.

exclusive representativeness over the religious service at festive dates. The final draft of the law on the general regime of denominations joined the parliamentary debate in 1928 with a series of amendments introduced by a senatorial committee which this time was presided the Bishop of Arad, Grigore Comşa. Among the additions to the text proposed by the ministerial experts there was the provision that "the functionaries' and militaries' duty held by their posts or ordered to attend formal religious services can not be regarded as coercion". Leting most likely intentionally the term "formal religious services" undefined, the committee of delegates also made a modification in the article which established the obligation of all denominations to officiate at religious ceremonies and national celebrations of the Royal Family, replacing the phrase "national celebrations" with "national solemnities". These statements have also been included in the final law that regulated the operation of the cults in Romania, act which was adopted in the spring of 1928.<sup>58</sup>

Even before the establishment by law of such provisions, the signs of preferential behavior of the authorities towards the two Romanian churches during national celebrations reappeared. After the somewhat equitable solution in this matter, set in the summer of 1921, on the return to power of the National Liberal Party, a new order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was emitted, which stated that "all administrative civil authorities were obliged to participate during national festivities at the divine service of the Orthodox Church".<sup>59</sup> The effects of this new provision which gave the Orthodox Church legitimacy on the religious ceremonies of festive days, were immediate: at the anniversary of 10<sup>th</sup> /23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1924, the city officials from Gherla who belonged entirely to the Greek-Catholic confession, were forced to take part in the Orthodox divine service celebrated in the chapel of the local correctional Institute.<sup>60</sup> Far from being an isolated case, such examples of opaque conformism from local officials could only irritate the Uniate Church hierarchy, which took as an affront the avoidance of its churches by the officials during national festivities. When such a behavior imposed by regulations, appeared in traditional Greek-Catholic centres in which it was ecclesiastically organized at a superior level than the Orthodox Church, the frustration felt was greater. To remain in the same area of the church, it's also worth remembering the circular letter issued by the Commandment of the Garrison from Gherla (led at the time by colonel

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<sup>58</sup> The entire text of the respective law in *Monitorul Oficial. Partea I*, nr. 89/1928, p. 3607-3613.

<sup>59</sup> *Unirea*, XXXII, nr. 16/1922, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> *Unirea*, XXXIV, nr. 24/1924, p. 1-2.

Brazda), in early 1926 by which the officials of public institutions in that town was made aware that "the celebration of January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1926 is celebrated by an official *Te Deum* at the official Orthodox Church, at 11 am. At the divine service are invited to take part all authorities, secondary schools primary and normal, regardless of their religion. Representing the state at official holidays in the Orthodox Church is for all authorities and schools an official duty", wanted to clarify at the end of the document the chief of the Garrison from the armenopolitan town.<sup>61</sup> It would be wrong to believe that only sometimes such decisions which forced officials to adopt a certain behavior during national festivities were in force. Shortly after the order published by the chief of the Garrison of Gherla, the Ministry of War also sent a communication to warn that "in performing the liturgies in memory of the heroes and other national holidays, the Orthodox Church is where the religious service should be officiated, regardless of the priest's hierarchy and the official program, once it has been established, must be respected by all the denominations.<sup>62</sup> The reconfirmation of such decisions would only further strain the Greek-Catholic Church's relationship with the state and the relationship between the two Romanian denominations.<sup>63</sup>

When facing such rigidity from the civil and military authorities of the State, what attitude did the Greek-Catholic Church adopt, in order to get the the role to which it felt it was entitled to, on the occasion of the days dedicated to national holidays? In respect of a tradition prevalent, the legal way was once more present. An avalanche of memoirs, addresses of protest to the high institutions of the state, personal interventions to various decision factors, press articles, public endeavours etc., tried to remedy a situation that was considered by the secular and ecclesiastical elite of the Greek-Catholic Church profoundly offensive towards the Uniate Church. Evidence that the Greek-Catholic Church was not at all pleased by the secondary importance that was given to it given during the festive days was demonstrated on multiple occasions: when the Episcopal Conference was held in Blaj on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July, 1923, the high prelates became aware that the source of the authorities' preferential treatment towards the Orthodox Church, including on the occasion of the National Day was given by the status it acquired in the recently adopted Constitution.<sup>64</sup> In order to correct this unacceptable situation, the bishops had decided at a topside

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<sup>61</sup> *Unirea*, XXXVI, nr. 6/1926, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Unirea*, XXXVI, nr. 40/1926, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Unirea*, XXXVII, nr. 2/1927, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 67/1924, f. 18r-v.

meeting to address as quickly as possible to the decisional forums so that “the formula in which the Romanian Orthodox Church was framed in the new Constitution should be given the authentic and compulsory (emphasis added) interpretation for all, in the expressly stated sense given by the authorities, that the expression “dominant in the state” is to be understood in the sense that the Orthodox religion is “the religion of the majority of Romanians” and not at all a religion or a Church of the state.” The exposition which was written at the end of that year by the Ordinariate from Lugoj did not overlook the discriminatory treatment of the state authorities against the Uniate Church during the national holidays.<sup>65</sup> From the same constitutional article which recognized the Romanian character for both Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Church, the document vigorously condemns the fact that “at public national solemnities, in official representations, the Orthodox always have the primacy, even when they are represented only by a priest or a protopope and our Church is represented by bishops, prelates or canon priests. Furthermore, orders are given that in public religious services the dead who didn't belong to our Church should be remembered in prayers”, was being mentioned in the exposition in the section dedicated to the authorities' abuses against the Uniate Church. The issue was taken up in the discussions at the bishops' conference on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1927, held at the Metropolitan residence from Blaj, when it had also been decided the editing of a memoir that would reaffirm “entire cult and consciousness freedom and all that derives from it” on the issue of national holidays,<sup>66</sup> that the issue has not received a favorable settlement of the Greek-Catholic Church is proved by the fact that it was on the agenda of other reunions of the ecclesiastic hierarchies. It was the case for example at the bishops' conference in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of June, 1934,<sup>67</sup> or the conference from December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1934,<sup>68</sup> both held in the same capital of the Romanian

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<sup>65</sup> The initial text, in A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 67/1924, f. 26r-28r.

<sup>66</sup> The recording of proceedings of the conference in A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Registratura generală. Documente înregistrate*, [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Record Office. Recorded documents], file nr. 1508/1927, f. 1v-2r.

<sup>67</sup> Arhivele Naționale, Serviciul Județean Alba [National Archives, Alba County Office], Fond *Mitropolia greco-catolică română de Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, Blaj. Arhiva generală. Documente neînregistrate*, [Fund of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Metropolis of Alba Iulia-Făgăraș, Blaj, General Archive. Unrecorded documents], file nr. 1/1928, f. 50r-v (next as A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Arhiva generală. Documente neînregistrate*) [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Archive. Unrecorded documents].

<sup>68</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, Fond *Mitropolia Blaj. Arhiva generală. Documente neînregistrate* [Fund of the Metropolis of Blaj. General Archive. Unrecorded documents], file nr. 1/1928, f. 63r-v.

Greek-Catholicism. The fact that "the officials are violating the religious consciousness of our believers who, as civil servants are obliged to take part in the *Te Deum* and other services in Greek-Oriental churches" was condemned, the decision to petition again the state institutions was adopted, in order to correct an existing normative at the time that profoundly insulted the Greek-Catholic Church.

Therefore, nor in the mid forties of the last century the problem of the authorities' assistance at the religious ceremonies at the national festivities did not see a solution in the sense desired so arduously by the Greek-Catholic Church. Framed in the post-war context, which generated so many changes for the Uniate Church of Transylvania as well, the understanding of this sensitive issues was able to reveal, as we saw with a plurality of meanings. The high hopes that the Uniate Church has had since it made the first steps on the path of cohabitation with its "blood brothers" have been mitigated not long afterwards, and the position of full equality of rights and treatment without distinction towards the Orthodox Church still remained an unfulfilled ideal. Even if you had to take the position of the "little sister" in the family of the two Romanian confessions, the Greek-Catholic Church has never ceased to hope that the place and the role that it believed it deserved inside the Romanian state will be recognized. A fact clearly demonstrated by the facts presented in the pages above.

# Justice and Repression in Communist Romania: The Trial of Greek-Catholic Bishop Alexandru Rusu in 1957

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**Abstract:** In early July, 1957, the Greek-Catholic Bishop of Maramureş, Alexandru Rusu was sentenced, following a mock trial, to a lifetime heavy detention. Thus, in the year that has to be the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, Bishop Rusu had to face, again, almost two years after its discharge in the "relative freedom", the rigors of communist prisons. This time, the prison experience of would be fatal, bishop Rusu ceasing from living on May 9, 1963. The present study, that take advantage of both recent history and unpublished archives sources, aims to reconstruct the internal and external circumstances in which the trial occurred and the stakes of the judicial presentations. In the same time, the study seeks to argue the limits of destalinization in the middle of the sixth decade of the last century, illustrated by the violent answer of the Communist authorities to the movement of Greek-Catholics in the summer of 1956. Last but not least, the study reveals the important role of the Secret Police (*Securitatea*) and communist justice in the construction of the political guilt and repression.

**Keywords:** Greek-Catholic Church, communism, repression, détente, communist justice, trial.

**Rezumat:** Justiție și represiune în România comunistă: procesul episcopului greco-catolic Alexandru Rusu din 1957. La începutul lunii iulie 1957, episcopul greco-catolic de Maramureş, Alexandru Rusu era condamnat, în urma unui simulacru judiciar, la temniţă grea pe viaţă. În anul în care avea să împlinească 73 de ani, episcopul Rusu avea să înfrunte, din nou, la mai bine de doi ani de la punerea sa în „relativă libertate”, rigorile închisorilor comuniste. De această dată, experienţa carcerală avea să-i fie fatală, episcopul încetând din viaţă, la 9 mai 1963. Studiul de faţă, care valorifică atât istoriografia recentă cât şi surse inedite provenind din arhivele româneşti, urmăreşte să reconstituie circumstanţele interne şi externe în care a avut loc, precum şi mizele acestei înscenări judiciare. În egală măsură, studiul caută să argumenteze limitele destinderii de la mijlocul deceniului şase al secolului trecut, ilustrate şi de răspunsul violent al autorităţilor comuniste la mişcarea petiţionară a greco-catolicilor din vara anului 1956. Nu în ultimul rând, studiul relevă rolul important al Securităţii şi justiţiei comuniste în construirea vinovăţiei politice şi administrarea represiunii.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Biserica Greco-Catolică, comunism, represiune, destindere limitată, justiție comunistă, proces

In the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1955 in the yard of the infamous Sighet prison three old men dressed in priestly garments were helped by

guardians to get into an automobile under the strict supervision of the feared prison warden, Vasile Ciolpan, character included in the communist persecutors' gallery. The three were Greek-Catholic bishops, Iuliu Hossu of Cluj-Gherla, Alexandru Rusu of Maramureş and Ioan Bălan of Lugoj who survived the extermination regime from the prison situated in the north of the country. Other comrades of theirs, along with whom they entered the gates of that prison almost five years ago, had died during the period of the imprisonment<sup>1</sup>. However, in the cold morning in January, the bishops will be surprised by the prison warden's kindness: he personally checked the blankets laid in the automobile in order to keep away the cold, and in the end reached out his hand smiling<sup>2</sup>. This time, the bishops will go along the road to Bucharest in the opposite way. It was also a sign that the wind of the post Stalinist defrosting had begun to blow in communist Romania too.

In December 1956, being at the Orthodox monastery from Cocoş where the communist authorities had fixed a compulsory residence as a punishment for the assumed role played in the petitioners' movement of the Greek-Catholics in the summer of that year<sup>3</sup>, thus separating him from the two bishops with whom he had been after the release from Sighet in the places which the authorities have indicated as place of residence, first at the Curtea de Arges monastery and, then, at Ciorogârla, bishop Alexandru Rusu reflected upon the episode and events that took place in the last one and a half year. Everything he had done from the moment he had been given "a relative freedom", from the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1955 and until his transfer to Cocoş monastery, "has been concerned exclusively with my right and my duty to help the Greek-Catholic believers to validate their liberty of consciousness and their freedom to practice their cult", the bishop will write later, under other circumstances<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, all his actions, similar with the

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<sup>1</sup> The bishop of Oradea Valeriu T. Freñiu (the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 1952), the bishop Ioan Suciuc (the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1973), the bishop Tit Liviu Chinezu who had been ordained secretly in December 1949 (the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 1955). The bishop Vasile Aftenie deceased in the hospital of the Văcăreşti prison, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1950, because of the brutalities suffered during the investigation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> The episode is depicted by the bishop, promoted among the cardinals by pope Paul the 6<sup>th</sup>, Iuliu Hossu in his memoirs, *Credința noastră este viața noastră*, Cluj-Napoca, Viața Creștină, 2003, pp. 350-351, 357, 363.

<sup>3</sup> Through the decision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs no. 6467/14 August 1956 bishop Rusu was set a mandatory residence for 60 months at the Cocoş monastery. See the Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Former Security's Archives, (ACNSAS), Fund P 13277, vol. 2, f. 1-5. The bishop was transferred at the new location on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August; see Iuliu Hossu, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

<sup>4</sup> The Decree no. 358/1<sup>st</sup> December 1948 for the settlement of the situation of the former Greek-Catholic cult penalized legally "the self-destruction" of the Greek-



ones of the other two bishops, were recognized in the memoir he sent on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, that year, to the Central Committee of the Romanian Working Party<sup>5</sup>. However, at the end of the same month, following an order received from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI), the 3<sup>rd</sup> Direction of Security, bishop Rusu was arrested by the Galați/MAI Regional Direction. At the request of Cluj Regional Direction he was transferred from Galați for the continuation of the investigation and he was sent to court “for participating in hostile activities during the events from the P.R. Hungary”<sup>6</sup>. What exactly was hiding behind those imprecise but very serious accusations through the association with the events that happened in the fall of 1956 in the neighbouring communist country, the bishop will understand during the investigation to which he was subjected to after the transfer in the city situated on Someșul Mic’s banks<sup>7</sup>. An investigation which extended over a period of more than two months, completed with his referring to court alongside other 12 persons, priests and believers and his conviction.

In what the trial and the conviction of Alexandru Rusu are concerned, in 1957, older or more recent historiography, as well as the memorial literature essentially states the following: in December 1956, the bishop was transferred (not from Cocoș monastery, as it was believed, but from the Securitate from Galați, as we have mentioned earlier) to the Securitate from Cluj, convicted together with other Greek-Catholic priests from Cluj or from the surroundings, involved in the petitioners’ movement of the Greek-Catholic clergy and believers from the summer of that year because he had elaborated and addressed several memoirs to the authorities distributed also to the international public opinion, and because he had sent

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Catholic Church through “the return” of the clergy and the believers to the Romanian Orthodox Church. For the communist authorities those who remained “faithful to Rome”, after December 1948, they were considered to be outside the law, the notion of “clandestine” associated with the Church as well as with the bishops, priests and believers had negative political connotations and implied a transgression of the law.

<sup>5</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278 vol. 6, f. 8.

<sup>6</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13277, vol. 2, f. 14.

<sup>7</sup> This wasn’t the bishop’s first experience of this type. In 1948 it was attempted to involve him in a trial connected to the illegal trafficking with currency, the investigation being initiated by the Prosecutor’s Office of the Court from Satu Mare. The file was submitted to the Court from Oradea at the end of September. However, the trial had many delays because from the file there didn’t result “enough evidence for him to get well deserved punishment”, as it was mentioned in a report of the Securitate. The investigation of bishop Rusu between January and May 1950 at the General Direction of the Securitate didn’t offer enough incriminating evidence so his involvement in this trial was dropped. See the report from the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1950, in ACNSAS, Fund P 13277, vol. 2, ff. 44-45.

pastorals to the Greek-Catholic clergy and believers. Considered moral author of the petitioners' movement, bishop Rusu was judged by the Military Court of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Military Region from Cluj and condemned through the sentence from the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1957 to twenty five years of forced labour for high treason and instigation<sup>8</sup>. He had passed through the prisons from Dej and Gherla where he died on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 1963<sup>9</sup>. The trial and conviction of bishop Rusu would illustrate, so the violent answer of the communist government to the Greek-Catholics' actions whose church was from December 1948 outside the law, the new wave of terror extending until the end of the sixth decade of the last century<sup>10</sup>. At the same time the unrest of the Greek-Catholics was placed in the broader context of the events that took place in Hungary, fact which reveals the persistence of a lecture key specific rather to the 1940s, the estimates formulated by the communist leader Miron Constantinescu in a speech delivered in Cluj, in November 1957, being as clear as possible in this sense<sup>11</sup>.

If the circumstances in which the trial had taken place as well as some of the stakes are to a certain extent retained by historiography, there are some unknown facts related to this episode. The present study, founded on declassified archival sources in the last years<sup>12</sup> aims to clarify some relevant aspects to the understanding of the multiple significations of bishop Rusu's trial, to unveil the political aims of this judiciary approach

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<sup>8</sup> Inaccurate statement. Through the sentence no. 1202/3 July 1957 of the Military Court of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Military Region from Cluj, Alexandru Rusu was convicted for high treason (art. 184/alin.I combined with art. 31 Penal Code) to life imprisonment and for public instigation (art. 327/alin. III) to ten years correctional prison, having to execute the highest punishment see ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 5, ff. 341 v.-342 v. Subsequently, by applying the stipulations of art. 7 Decree no. 5/1963 the punishment was changed to 25 years of high security imprisonment, ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 15, ff. 100, 115.

<sup>9</sup> Silvestru Augustin Prundus, Clemente Plaianu, *Catolicism și ortodoxie românească. Scurt istoric al Bisericii Române Unite*, Cluj-Napoca, Viața Creștină, 1994, p. 121; Cristian Vasile, *Între Vatican și Kremlin. Biserica Greco-Catolică în timpul regimului comunist*, Bucharest, Curtea Veche, 2003, pp. 229-230; O. Bozgan, *România versus Vatican. Persecuția Bisericii Catolice din România comunistă în lumina documentelor diplomatice franceze*, Bucharest, Sylvi, 2000, p. 41; O Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară greco-catolică din 1956”, in Idem, (edited by), *Studii de istoria Bisericii*, Bucharest, University of Bucharest, 2000, p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> O. Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară..” in *loc. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>11</sup> Ioan-Marius Bucur, „Situția Bisericii Române Unite în perioada 1949-1964”, in *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Catholica*, XLIII, nr. 1, 1998, pp. 97-98.

<sup>12</sup> I consider two files that exist at ACNSAS under the name of bishop Alexandru Rusu: Fund P 13277, composed of two volumes and Fund P 13278 composed of twenty volumes. The last one regards, among other things, the trial from 1957.

and, last but not least, to reveal the way in which the political guilt was built in this case.

Both the Greek-Catholics' petitioners' movement and bishop Rusu's trial as well as other judiciary activities that targeted some of the priests and Greek-Catholic believers involved in the events from 1956, have as starting point the communist authorities' religious politics towards the Greek-Catholics, specifically prohibiting the existence of this church.

The suppression of the Greek-Catholic Church had taken place in the context of Romania's sovietisation<sup>13</sup>. The Bucharest communist government's strategy to annihilate the Uniate Church was sequenced in several stages, mainly inspired by the Ukrainian experience<sup>14</sup>. The preparation and the coordination was given to the Ministry of Cults, and its implementation implied the collaboration of several central and local administrative structures, the repressive apparatus having a significant role. In order to ensure the success of the operation, the authorities resorted to a broad range of measures and activities – violence, in different forms and of different types was a constant – through which they aimed to create among the clergy and the believers a favourable tendency for the so called religious unification, described as a political necessity of the times, meant to benefit the consolidation of the “popular-democracy”<sup>15</sup>.

In its turn, the hierarchy of the Romanian Orthodox Church wasn't a stranger to the “staging” of this dramatic episode<sup>16</sup>.

In order to confer legitimacy to this action an ample propaganda machine was set in motion, and the severe control exerted on the *mass media*, not only through censure but also through the prohibition of the Catholic works' publication stalled, mainly, the distribution of the opinions that were against the planned action<sup>17</sup>. In the speech of the communist authorities “the

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<sup>13</sup> C. Vasile, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-163; Ioan-Marius Bucur, *Din istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice Române 1918-1953*, Cluj-Napoca, Accent, 2003, p. 202-220; Ovidiu Bozgan, *România versus Vatican...*, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> O. Bozgan, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-25; Andre Kom, „Unificarea Bisericii Române Unite cu Biserica Ortodoxă Română în 1948”, in O. Bozgan, *Studii de istoria Bisericii*, pp. 103-109; I-M. Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>15</sup> An edifying example for the manner in which the recruitment of the Greek-Catholic priests was attempted by the communist authorities in order to sustain the “religious unification” is offered by the prelate Nicolae Brânzeu from Lugoj in Idem, *Jurnalul unui preot bătrân*, edition with a preface and footnotes by Pia Brânzeu and Luminița Wallner-Rădulescu, foreword by Claudiu T. Arieșan, Timișoara, Eurostampa, 2011, pp. 677-678. See also C. Vasile, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-158.

<sup>16</sup> O. Bozgan, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30; C. Vasile, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-202.

<sup>17</sup> As early as the first part of the year 1948 the censorship of the Greek-Catholic publications roughened. The collective letter addressed by the Greek-Catholic bishops

religious unification" was regarded as "a problem of every Greek-Catholic believer's conscience", the popular-democracy regime offering the citizens the possibility to solve "completely free", "the return" of the Greek-Catholics at Romanian Orthodox Church forming an eloquent testimony in what concerns the respect of the religious freedom in the Romanian Popular Republic (RPR)<sup>18</sup>. In other occasions, the speech has as theme the existence of a social-cultural and political cleavage between priests and believers, on the one hand, and bishops, on the other hand, responsible for the refuse of the latter to sustain the authentic, popular tendency "to return" to the "ancestral church". If the first were associates of the democratic and progressive forces, the latter were positioned besides the retrograde forces, because they intended to transform the Uniate Church into "an instrument in the hands of the outside reaction and the inside remaining", however their efforts were in vain<sup>19</sup>. The interpretation in Stalinist style, of the "religious unification" was internalized at the level of the administrative and repressive structures involved, thus justifying the measures taken against those who opposed even if they were bishops, priests or believers. For example, in a report of the Securitate about bishop Alexandru Rusu, from 1950, it is said that this one "was actively against the unification (...) composed and broadcasted instigating memorandums (...) consequently he was arrested in October 1948 with other bishops"<sup>20</sup>. In other documents the arrest of bishops was catalogued as "a preventive measure taken by the government"<sup>21</sup>.

The Romanian Orthodox Church created its own speech on the events, the key concept being "religious reunification" of the Romanians, in which formulations that echoed the speech of the communist authorities can be found too, for instance, in matters that concern the religious liberty<sup>22</sup>.

The communist authorities' preoccupation to endorse the thesis according to which the believers' and Greek-Catholic clergy's return to

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to the believers, on the occasion of the celebration of the Saints Peter and Paul, being passed on with the help of messengers, the authorities preventing its printing.

<sup>18</sup> I-M. Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 233.

<sup>20</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13277, vol. 2, f. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 44.

<sup>22</sup> O. Gillet, *Religie și naționalism. Ideologia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române sub regimul comunist*. Traducere de Mariana Petrișor, București, Ed. Compania, 2001, pp. 167-171, 176-178; Greta Miron, "Discurs istoric și propagandă politică. Unirea românilor cu Biserica Romei în publicistica din anii 1948-950", in Nicolae Gudea, Dan Ruscu (eds.), *Biserica Română Unită (Greco-Catolică). 60 de ani de la desființare*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Mega, 2009, pp. 385-398.

Orthodox Church is an authentic action, started from the *bottom* is confirmed, among other things, by the Decree no. 358/1 December 1948 "for the establishment of the rightful situation of the former Greek-Catholic cult". The premise of this normative text is "the return" of the Greek-Catholic local communities (of the parishes) to the Romanian Orthodox Cult (art. 1), so that the next article to establish the rightful situation of the *former* Greek-Catholic cult. In other words, the decree confirmed the so called "self-dissolution" of the Greek-Catholic cult – celebrated through the festive assembly organized in Alba-Iulia, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, to which beside Orthodox hierarchs and priests, former Greek-Catholic priests as well as former believers participated who were mobilized by the local administrations<sup>23</sup>– and all the assets that belonged to the central organizations and institutions of the church became state property<sup>24</sup>. Equally, the aforementioned decree which remained in force until the fall of the communist regime, in December 1989, became, in the following decades an essential piece in the building of the political and criminal guilt of those who remained "loyal to Rome" – whether we consider the bishops, priests or believers.

However, the official discourse, both that of the communist authorities but also that of the Orthodox Church, regarding the success of the religious unification was undermined by the survival of the Greek-Catholicism, which repressed and supervised constantly as it was, created enough problems for the authorities, the petitioners' movement from 1956 being an eloquent testimony<sup>25</sup>.

If the origins of the movement are still debated by historians, in what concerns the circumstances in which it appeared there is a relative consensus. The changes that had taken place in the USSR after Stalin's death, as well as the limited *détente* between the East and West, illustrated by the so called "spirit of Geneva", had echoes in communist Romania too, where some measures having a liberal character were adopted, very limited if compared with other communist states, among which the release of a number of political prisoners, including the Greek-Catholic bishops and some of the priests.<sup>26</sup> Besides, these measures were signalled by the western diplomats accredited in Bucharest, for example, Jean Deciry, France's

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<sup>23</sup> O. Bozgan, „Biserica Romană Unită între rezistență și „unificare religioasă”. Contribuții documentare”, in Idem, *Studii de Istoria Bisericii*, pp. 126-127; I-M. Bucur, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>24</sup> I-M. Bucur, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-220.

<sup>25</sup> O. Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară...”, in *loc. cit.*, p.168.

<sup>26</sup> I-M. Bucur, „Situția Bisericii Române Unite...”, in *loc. cit.* pp. 95-96; O. Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară...”, in *loc. cit.*, p. 168.

representative, in a report from the summer of the year 1955, stated that “at the moment, the Catholic Church from Romania like the one from Hungary seems to enjoy the benefits of some measures of ease”<sup>27</sup>. Within the limits of this atmosphere, of limited repose, the three Greek-Catholic bishops were brought from Sighet prison to Bucharest, being hospitalized for the recovery of their health, initially in dr. D. Gerota sanatorium, then in Floreasca emergency hospital, where they could receive visits from their relatives or close acquaintances.<sup>28</sup>

Soon, however, the contradictions between the communist authorities and bishops regarding the significations and consequences of the limited tolerance in the case of the Greek-Catholics, became obvious. In the discussions had with the high clerks of the Ministry of Cults as well as during the audiences with P. Constantinescu-Iași, the minister of cults and with Petru Groza, former prime-minister, who then became the president of the Great National Assembly’s Presidium, the bishops were told that their release was the result of a general détente in the country. This time they weren’t imposed to accept retirement, although the Decree no. 1596/17 September 1948 through which the acknowledgement of some bishops of both rites, Latin and Eastern, still in effect was withdrawn and had this justification<sup>29</sup>. In order to ensure the things necessary for the everyday life they would receive a sum of money, and at the residence appointed by the Ministry of Cults, the monastery from Curtea de Argeș, they would benefit of a certain degree of freedom, provided they would not cause “unrest”. Instead, “in what concerns the past, they wouldn’t return over it”, the rehabilitation not being concerned with the change of the confessional *status quo* confirmed through the decree no. 358/1<sup>st</sup> December 1948. Through this *sui-generis* arrangement the authorities hoped that keeping the bishops away from their residences, against their wish, and, utterly, of the Greek-Catholic believers will prevent the occurrence of some confessional disorder and unrest in Transylvania; also, the bishops found at an esteemed age, Ioan Bălan (76 years old), Alexandru Rusu (72 years old) and Iuliu Hossu (72 years old) will be gradually forgotten. At the same time, the solution was useful from the point of view of the external politics whose objective was at that moment the enlisting in UNO. The will and the capacity of the communist government from Bucharest to respect the founding principles of the organisation’s book being seriously questioned by the Romanian

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<sup>27</sup> Ovidiu Bozgan, *România versus Vatican...*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>28</sup> Cristian Vasile, *Între Vatican și Kremlin...*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>29</sup> The decree no. 1596/17 September 1948 was adopted under the law no. 166 in order to put to retire all the clergymen. See I-M. Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

exile's representatives, but also by some occidental governments<sup>30</sup>. Instead, the bishops considered that the improvement of their situation represents just a first step in the direction of the "Uniate Church's rehabilitation" that would be accompanied by other restoring measures, the most important being the repeal of the aforementioned decree<sup>31</sup>.

However, the counting and the estimates of the authorities will prove to be erroneous. The bishops accepted the arrangements of the authorities, considered, as I was saying, to be temporary and incomplete. At the same time, they continued to act as bishops, with a jurisdiction given by the Holy See, even if the acknowledgement was withdrawn by the communist government from the fall of 1948. Consequently, they considered themselves entitled to be interested in the spiritual needs of their believers, to make decisions in this sense and to initiate actions for the legal reinstatement of the Greek-Catholic Church<sup>32</sup>. The believers received with joy and emotion the news of the bishops' release, the wave of optimism feeding the rumours connected to their return at their residences, and the visits received during the period they were hospitalized, multiply after they arrive at Curtea de Argeş.<sup>33</sup>

The bishops weren't visited only by believers and priests. Seizing the opportunities offered by the dismissal of some restrictions regarding the journeys of the diplomats through the country, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 1955, Jean Deciry, the ministry of France to Bucharest travelled to Curtea de Argeş, where, quite easily, he was introduced to the three "esteemed bishops" with whom he had a conversation. According to the French diplomat the bishops were benefiting of decent conditions, they could concelebrate the Mass according to the Greek-Catholic rite, in a salon transformed into chapel, and their health state was satisfactory. The three gave him the impression of great dignity, against the pressure and the years of imprisonment, the diplomat wrote down, they didn't abjure their faith. In the new location, they wait in silence and hope they could re-join their diocese<sup>34</sup>. The episode mentioned also by bishop Hossu in his memoirs, irritated the authorities, who through the inspectors of the Ministry of Cults

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<sup>30</sup> The Romanian Popular Republic was accepted by UN on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1955.

<sup>31</sup> I. Hossu, *op. cit.*, pp. 373-375, 393-395.

<sup>32</sup> The opinion according to which the bishops were determined to withdraw was erroneous because the jurisdiction of the bishop cannot be terminated, but the acknowledgement by the minister circulated at that time in the Greek-Catholic environment, see Nicolae Brânzeu, *Jurnalul unui preot bătrân...*, p. 677.

<sup>33</sup> Iuliu Hossu, *op. cit.*, p. 387

<sup>34</sup> O. Bozgan, *România versus Vatican...*, p. 39.

reproached the bishops the fact that they had accepted the meeting, but at that moment, other reactions didn't exist. More than a year will pass until this episode will become the main accusation in the trial against bishop Alexandru Rusu<sup>35</sup>.

With the help of the priests, gradually, they managed to recompose the painting of the Church's suffering, as well as of those who remained faithful to their belief and decided, with one's consent, to reorganize the diocesan structures as they existed in 1948, action necessary also as a result of bishops Valeriu Traian Frențiu and Ioan Suci's death, getting in touch with those appointed in their absence by the Apostolic Nunciature from Bucharest. Thus, bishop Hossu the holder of the Cluj-Gherla diocese, had taken Oradea diocese whose apostolic administrator he had been during the Hungarian occupation of North Transylvania, (1940-1944), bishop Alexandru Rusu, the holder of Maramures diocese, had taken Blaj archdiocese because after the elective synod from March 1946 he had been elected and confirmed by Vatican as Blaj's<sup>36</sup> metropolitan bishop, bishop Ioan Bălan continuing to lead the believers from Lugoj diocese whose holder he was. The reorganization was meant, as well, to clarify some aspects connected to the carrying out of the jurisdiction and the functioning of the ecclesiastic structures, especially as various arrests from the 1940s had created a series of spiritual and canonical problems which couldn't be regulated by the vicars who existed in the dioceses<sup>37</sup>. Proceeding in this way, the bishops, wanted, all the same, to prove that there is a canonical organization – *de jure*, as bishop Hossu called it – of the church, entitled to request the annulment of the Decree no. 358/1948 and that they “can work through dioceses, from man to man, preparing the return to legality”<sup>38</sup>. As legitimate leaders, the bishops would decide which is the best way to follow, as well as the adequate means to legalize again the Uniate Church, point of view expressed during a visit made by a priest from the Blaj archdiocese, which passed to the Orthodox Church, accompanied by two Greek-Catholic lawyers. During the meeting, which took place, according to bishop Hossu's memoirs, in the fall or winter of 1955, the three visitors

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<sup>35</sup> Iuliu Hossu, *op. cit.*, pp. 404-405.

<sup>36</sup> On account of the government led by P. Groza's refusal to confirm the new metropolitan bishop of the Uniate Church, the Holy See didn't initiate the proceedings established in the Concordat signed with Romania, which was in force at that time, the interim from the leadership of the Uniate Church, with bishop Ioan Suci as apostolic administrator extending until the prohibition of this church. See C. Vasile, *Între Vatican și Kremlin...*, pp. 106-112.

<sup>37</sup> ACNSAS Fund P 13278, vol. 1, ff. 30v.-31.

<sup>38</sup> Iuliu Hossu, *op. cit.*, p. 418.



pleaded for the mobilization of the priests and intellectuals from all the dioceses in order to launch an action of organization of the believers and of gathering of signatures for the legalization of the Uniate Church. Along with the suspicion that they are dealing with a possible challenging action staged by the authorities, the bishops rejected the proposal stating that the church has a legal structure and the episcopate through memoirs and audiences at the Ministry of Cults and at President Petru Groza requested the abrogation of the Decree no. 358. The idea was good, the bishops sustained, but the way wasn't good, being revealed, with all the negative outcomes for the Greek-Catholic Church, weakening the "legal power" of bishops, who through the "existing ecclesiastical structures" they can perform their activity preparing the return to legitimacy "in the middle of the believers who remained with their priests and bishops"<sup>39</sup>. From those related by bishop Hossu in his memoirs it results that the bishops didn't intend, at least in the second part of the year 1955, to involve the clergy and the believers in the actions meant to lead to the legalization of their church, preferring to address themselves petitions to the communist authorities.

The series of actions of this type was opened by bishop Alexandru Rusu. Being at the end of July in Bucharest for a medical examination, bishop Rusu asked for an audience at the Ministry of Cults, and as a result of the refuse he sent, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1955 (and not at the end of July, how it was remembered by some studies) at the same institution a memoir in which he challenges the premises and the validity of the Decree no. 358 through which the Greek-Catholic cult was set outside the law. The statement, the bishop wrote, according to which the believers "using the liberty of conscience guaranteed by the RPR" would leave the Greek-Catholic faith to embrace "in mass and enthusiastically the faith of the Eastern ecumenical church also called Orthodox" represented a "patent untruth" contradicted by the manifestation of faith from 1948 and from the next years. Starting from "the existing realities", from his status and on behalf of the other two colleague bishops alive, he requested the minister P. Constantinescu-Iași to solve "the issue of the Uniate Church" through the dismissal of the dissolution decree and offering the liberty to this church temporarily "at least that which the Latin rite Catholic Church enjoys today of the country's ethnic minorities", the liberty of conscience and the religious liberty guaranteed by the RPR's constitution not being denied or forbidden in what the Greek-Catholic cult is concerned. Moreover, in order to find a final solution for the status of the catholic cult of both rites from the RPR<sup>40</sup>, the bishop advanced

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 417-418.

<sup>40</sup> According to the law-Decree no. 177 from the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1948 regarding the general organization of cults, the religious institutions in order to be recognized

the solution of the dialogue between the authorities and the Holy See being convinced that “a solution – so wonderfully voiceful at the same time with all of the atmosphere of Geneva”<sup>41</sup> will be found. Similar opinions were reiterated by bishop Rusu during the audience he was offered by the president P. Groza, whom he also gave a copy of the memoir too. Two months later, an article published by Stelian Nițulescu<sup>42</sup>, the president of the Association for UN from the RPR, in the Romanian officious “Scântea”, in which he sustained that the rights mentioned in UN charter, including the freedom of conscience and the religious liberty, would be “fully accomplished in Communist Romania”, has generated an answer from bishop Rusu. In the letter he wrote to the author of the article, bishop Rusu stated that through its politics “the government continues to keep hundreds of thousands of Romanian rite believers of the Catholic cult, called Greek-Catholic under the provisions of Decree no. 358” which declared non-existent a religious cult “which never seized existing and which asks perseveringly for its right to a completely free existence”. The memoir he addressed the Ministry of Cults, the bishop also wrote, remained without an answer, and “the thousands of believers are deprived of the right to exert their freedom” fact which is a “direct denial” of one of the basis of his article. In the end of the epistle, he requested S. Nițulescu to take all the measures with the authorities so that the demand from his memoir is accomplished “facilitating in this way the acknowledgement of Romania among the UN members”<sup>43</sup>. At the same time, bishop Rusu addressed a letter to the new prime-minister of communist Romania, Chivu Stoica<sup>44</sup> in which he summarizes his letters sent to the Ministry of Cults and S. Nițulescu in order to dismiss the decree which declared the Greek-Catholic

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through the decree of the Presidium of the Grand National Assembly was to adopt a status validated by the Ministry of Cults. See C. Vasile, *Între Vatican și Kremlin...*, pp. 136-137. On account of the events from the fall of the year 1948, following which the Greek-Catholic Church was suppressed *de jure* and of the campaign against Roman Catholic bishops from the following period the issue of adopting the status of the catholic cult from PRR remained unsolved.

<sup>41</sup> The memoir was signed as the bishop of Maramureș, “chosen and confirmed by the Holy See of Rome, metropolitan bishop of the ecclesiastical province from Alba Iulia and Făgăraș.” I have consulted a copy of the memoir that is at the ACNSAS, Fund P 013278, vol. 1, ff. 265-268. The episode is rendered by bishop Hossu too who states that both he and also bishop I. Bălan received a copy, bishop Rusu telling them that “he made on behalf of everybody”. See I. Hossu, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

<sup>42</sup> Former justice minister between 2nd September 1949 and 24th January 1953.

<sup>43</sup> I have consulted a copy of the letter that is at ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 1, ff. 269-270. The letter is dated in the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1955, Curtea de Argeș.

<sup>44</sup> He had been named the head of the government on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1955 and remained until the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1961.

cult non-existent<sup>45</sup>. At the end of the document bishop Rusu requested the intervention of the prime-minister C. Stoica regarding the resetting of the Greek-Catholic cult "in its natural rights". However, the most important and well-known petitioners' activity took place in the spring of the next year. The blueprint of the memoir elaborated by bishop Rusu was discussed and finalized together with the other bishops, in the context of the hopes connected to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and CC Plenum of PMR<sup>46</sup>. In the memoir addressed to the political authorities from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1956, the bishops denounced the abusive and illegal methods through which in 1948 a part of the clergy and the believers were "moved" to the Orthodox Church, denying the value of "the assembly from Cluj, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October" and the right of the 36 priests gathered there to decide on behalf of the whole Church. Invoking the laws of the state as well as the international commitments assumed by the PRR, the bishops requested the abolishment of the Decree 358/1948 and reinstating the United Church "into all the rights it had before"<sup>47</sup>. The memoir was multiplied and passed on in the Greek-Catholic dioceses reaching in this way the conscience of many believers and, with the help of a Western legation it would become known abroad.

Through the passing on of the memoirs, bishop Rusu would declare later, during the investigation, the bishops wanted to inform the priests and the believers about their measures taken in order to help the Church become legalized again, and, at the same time, they were hoping that these ones would sustain through their attitude and through expressing their religious believes the things stated in these memoirs<sup>48</sup> offering in this way more legitimacy to the Greek-Catholic cause<sup>49</sup>. It seems that there were other two circumstantial factors that determined the bishops' change of strategy in the sense of co-opting the priests and believers in the actions that were meant to help the Church become legal again. One would be the absence of an answer from the part of the authorities to the bishops' petitions. Although they were visited quite frequently by clerks of the Ministry of Cults, the demands expressed by them weren't evoked in the discussions had with these ones. The second factor could be connected to the decision of the

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<sup>45</sup> The two documents were enclosed in the letter addressed to the prime-minister Chivu Stoica. ACNSAS, Fund P 13278 vol. 1, f. 271.

<sup>46</sup> According to the declarations made by bishop Rusu during the trial. See ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 5, f. 148v.

<sup>47</sup> I.-M. Bucur, *art. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>48</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 013278, vol. 1, f. 68.

<sup>49</sup> See the letter addressed by bishop Al. Rusu to the prime-minister C. Stoica on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1956, published by O. Bozgan in Idem, „Mișcarea petiționară...”, in *loc. cit.*, pp. 181-183.

Romanian Orthodox Church hierarchy of “strengthening the ecclesiastical unification” implemented in the summer of that year.

The debut of the movement for the Uniate Church’s legalization can be placed in April 1956, when the first petitions get to the Ministry of Cults, the impetus of the believers’ initiative was owed to the Greek-Catholic clergy, the highest point being reached in the months July and August of the same year<sup>50</sup>. Or, just in those months the Orthodox Patriarchy from Bucharest, discreetly informed about the Greek-Catholic bishops’ memoirs, planned a series of actions meant to discourage the clergy and the believers’ initiatives, which implied, among other things, the filling in by the “returned” priests of some questionnaires through which they would renew their obedience towards the Orthodox Church. Being placed in this context, the petitioners’ initiatives appears as a reaction to the Orthodox hierarchy’s action that the atmosphere of relaxation couldn’t justify it any more<sup>51</sup>.

One of the important centres of the movement was Cluj. The historian O. Bozgan calculated based on the statistics done by the Ministry of Cults that 3,243 signatures were obtained from the Greek-Catholic believers. Not by chance, at the beginning of August, during a meeting held at the Orthodox diocese from this town a commandment was constituted for the control of the “unrest” led by the Episcopal vicar Sabin Truția, former Greek-Catholic priest. During the session from the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1956, “the crisis cell” decided to narrow the religious services that were to take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August in order to avoid the agglomerations, to perform actions of “counter-propaganda” among the intellectuals from Cluj and to ask the authorities to arrest the Greek-Catholic priests considered responsible for the movement - N. Pura, S. A. Prunduș, V. Chindriș, L. Man, Iosif Bal, Gh. Neamțu and Augustin Fărcaș from Gherla<sup>52</sup>.

The highest intensity of the movement was reached, as I have said, in August, when most of the petitions were edited. The last petitions that got to the Ministry of Cults came from Cluj and from some of the places near the city. A statistics made by the Ministry of Cults, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September registered 20,308 signatures, but the clerks undervalued the participation omitting from the statistics Oradea region, and some lists that arrived later weren’t included. From the available data, published by the historian O. Bozgan, it turns out that the majority of those who signed was

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 169-171.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 171. The letter sent by bishop Rusu is edifying in this sense, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1956, to the Orthodox bishop from Oradea, Valerian Zaharia. See ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 1, ff. 272-273.

<sup>52</sup> O. Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară...”, in *loc. cit.*, pp. 174-175.

from the country side, a smaller number coming from cities like Cluj, Satu Mare and Gherla. Locating the movement in the rural and urban area, O. Bozgan considers, reflects the demographic realities from Transylvania on the one hand, and the asymmetry of the means of control and repression more numerous in the cities than in the villages, on the other hand<sup>53</sup>.

In the case of the bishops, the most important consequence of the petitioners' actions was their separation. Initially, the three bishops were transferred (and at the request of the Patriarchy from Bucharest, which considered them responsible for the "unrest" from Transylvania) at the monastery from Ciorogârla<sup>54</sup>. Under the pretext of giving an audience to the Ministry of Cults, bishop Rusu was transferred on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1956 at the Cocoș monastery from Tulcea. In the letter addressed to the prime-minister Chivu Stoica on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1956 bishop Rusu depicted the way in which his move happened and requested, among other things, the reassessment of the treatment that the three bishops were subjected to because from the moment they were detained, at the end of October 1948, they didn't do "anything that wouldn't be in their right and duty as heads of a forsaken church, which asks more and more perseveringly its right to a free life"<sup>55</sup>. In his turn, bishop I. Hossu was moved to Căldărușani monastery<sup>56</sup>.

If the bishops agreed with the petitioners' actions it was because it resumed the principles and arguments enunciated in their memoirs, the organizing of a public liturgy was not encouraged because they thought that this kind of manifestation would have been interpreted by the authorities as a challenge<sup>57</sup>. However, on Sunday morning, the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, the inhabitants from Cluj found in the centre of the city will have been intrigued by the crowd present in front of the Piarist Church<sup>58</sup> located in the vicinity of the university, the surprise being greater in the moment when the two

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>54</sup> I. Hossu, *op. cit.*, pp. 431, 432-433.

<sup>55</sup> See O. Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară...” , in *loc cit.*, p. 182; see also I. Hossu, *op. cit.*, pp. 437-439.

<sup>56</sup> I. Hossu, *op. cit.*, pp. 441, 447.

<sup>57</sup> O. Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară...” , in *loc. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>58</sup> Through the Agreement signed in Rome, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1932, by Romania and the Holy See the Greek-Catholic bishop from Cluj-Gherla had the right to name a priest who had to serve according to a certain schedule in the Roman Catholic church found under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic bishop from Alba Iulia. See also O. Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară...” , in *loc. cit.*, p. 175. If V. Chindriș and then, the Greek-Catholic literature estimate that there were present approximately 5,000 people, the investigators of the Securitate considered that there participated between 2,000 and 3,000 people. See ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 2, f. 235.

priests started the celebration of a liturgy in the Greek-Catholic rite. The initiative of organizing a religious service in the Greek-Catholic rite belonged to the impetuous priest V. Chindriș, well-known among the Greek-Catholics from Cluj and not only. The hope that this kind of public manifestation of one's faith would convince the authorities to accept the Uniate Church's return to legal existence was not only naïve but also tragic through its consequences. In the evening of 13 August as well as in the next days, the Securitate from Cluj arrested those considered to be the authors and accomplices of the "instigating" action conducted a day earlier<sup>59</sup>. The investigations were conducted by MAI/Cluj Region the 8<sup>th</sup> Service Investigations from the Securitate responsible with political crimes<sup>60</sup>. Initially, the investigators seemed to be concerned with the events from the 12<sup>th</sup> of August as well as with other public manifestations of faith of the Greek-Catholics expected to take place in the next days<sup>61</sup>. However, they didn't manage to prevent other two similar events. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, after the end of the Roman-Catholic religious service, priest Izidor Ghiurco, who had celebrated together with priest Chindriș on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, entered the Piarist church and celebrated a religious service of Greek-Catholic rite, and 4 days later, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August he repeated the gesture, being this time arrested by the Securitate. Gradually, the investigators who prosecuted this file extended the investigations, being interested in the activities that the ones arrested performed "in Greek-Catholic underground" (religious services, baptisms, marriage ceremonies), in their political options,

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<sup>59</sup> The priests T. Băliban, I. Chertes – bishop secretly consecrated, V. Chindriș, Iulian Manu – Basilian monk, L. Oprea, V. Sălăjanu – Basilian monk, Iosif Singeorgian, and V. Fărcaș, Greek-Catholic believer were detained in the evening of 13 August, Oct. Ghiurco, priest Izidor Ghiurco's son, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, priest Izidor Ghiurco on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August. Viorica Răileanu, who multiplied with her typewriter the believers' supporting petitions for the Uniate Church's legalization elaborated by priest Chindriș, had to go through a non-custodial interrogation initially, however at the end of November she was also arrested. In the memory of the contemporaries and, then, in historiography, the group is known under the name "priest V. Chindriș's group", however the investigation file no. 269/1956 opened up by the Securitate has as subtitle "Băliban T[eofil] and others". To find out about the arrests see ACNSAS, Fund P, 13278, vol. 2, f. 8 and vol. 5, f. 2.

<sup>60</sup> The unit specialized in investigations with political crimes was the 5<sup>th</sup> Direction Criminal Investigations from the Securitate transformed through HCM no. 1361/11 July 1956 in the 8<sup>th</sup> Direction Investigations. Under the subordination of this Direction there were the Regional Investigations Services. See Corneliu Pintilescu, *Justiție militară și represiune politică în România comunistă (1948-1956). Studiu de caz: Activitatea Tribunalului Militar Cluj*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012, p. 118.

<sup>61</sup> See ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 2, ff. 44-46, 173-174, 257-260.

including those from the period before the arrival of the communists in power in order to facilitate the creation of political guilt, and, last but not least, they wanted to “unmask” the concealed nature of the “unrest” provoked among the population through “the contacts” the priests had with the bishops from whom they received “the instructions”. The interrogations’ written records of those arrested show in a very convincing way the methods and the tactics used by the investigators in order to achieve their goals<sup>62</sup>. The investigations, as historian C. Pintilescu reveals, unfolded after a question and answer plan, answers which were to be obtained in order to follow the purpose towards which the investigation was heading. The scripts, named by the Securitate “legends” were “situations and events imagined by the investigators which were to be created during the investigations in order to frame the presumed actions of the defendants in the criminal law” using self-incriminating declarations<sup>63</sup>. Although the investigators insisted on the presumed role played by the bishops in the initiation and support of the petitioners’ movement through the “instructions” sent to their collaborators from the dioceses and to the priests, it seems that the decision to open a criminal investigation against them wasn’t yet made by the superior echelon of the Communist Party and the Securitate. If one of the investigating officers proposed, in the first phase of the investigation, to send an investigator at Cocoş monastery to interrogate bishop Rusu, in the materials subsequently elaborated, the proposal wasn’t reiterated.<sup>64</sup>

The investigation file was completed in the last part of November being sent according to the legal procedures<sup>65</sup> by the Military Prosecution to the Military Court from Cluj<sup>66</sup>. In the session from the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1956, the court ordered the sending to trial of the 11 accused and set the trial date for the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1957<sup>67</sup>. However, a few days before the appointed date, specifically the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, the Military Prosecution requested, and the Military Court accepted, the return of the file regarding “Băliban Teofil and others” in order to continue the investigation in the case of others accused. Also, the Prosecution asked the court to set a new trial date more far off, so that the Court decided to defer the case for the 25<sup>th</sup> of February<sup>68</sup>. It is very likely that the proceedings of the Military Court were

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<sup>62</sup> For the written records of the interrogations as well as for other documents about the criminal investigation see ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 2-4.

<sup>63</sup> C. Pintilescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-54.

<sup>64</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 2, ff. 164, 166.

<sup>65</sup> C. Pintilescu, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>66</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 5, f. 1.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 7.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 9.

determined by the decision of the communist authorities to end in a brutal manner the Greek-Catholic petitioners' actions, the justice having a very important role, the arrest and the investigation of bishop Rusu being among the measures taken into consideration, this one being considered the moral author of the movement<sup>69</sup>. On the other hand, the tragic evolution of the events from Hungary will have had a significant role, the correlation between the arrest of bishop Rusu and the situation from the communist neighbouring country being made not only in the internal documents of the Securitate but also in the reports of some western diplomats accredited in Bucharest. For example, in a report from the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1957, Jean Deciry, minister of France from Bucharest stated that he was told by "reliable sources" that "the old bishop from Cluj-Gherla [sic!] was convicted to prison for life because he tried to reconstruct the Uniate Church and that he created troubles during the events from Budapest"<sup>70</sup>.

As we have already mentioned at the beginning of this study<sup>71</sup>, under the internal and international circumstances described, at the end of December 1956 bishop Al. Rusu was arrested by the Securitate from Galați and then transferred to the Securitate from Cluj<sup>72</sup>. The criminal investigation against him is initiated on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1956 on the ground of "the materials gathered by the prosecuting authority", actually, derived from the investigation of the arrested priests in August 1956, being accused of instigation and public disorder punished by art. 327/paragraph 3 Penal Code of RPR. The detention ordinances from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> January are followed by an arrest warrant from the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, the investigation being performed with the continuance of the arrest status of bishop Rusu, in the period 5 January – 20 March 1956<sup>73</sup>. The decision to confer accusations formulated against bishop Rusu with a primarily political character is confirmed also by the inclusion in the investigation file of another person completely unknown to this one. The person is Silvia Dârlea, from Arad, former member of the

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<sup>69</sup> I.-M. Bucur, *art. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, p. 97; O. Bozgan, „Mișcarea petiționară...”, in *loc. cit.*, p. 178; C. Vasile, *Între Vatican și Kremlin...*, pp. 249-252.

<sup>70</sup> O. Bozgan, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 42-43. The French diplomat made a mistake, since this was about bishop Al. Rusu and not about the holder of the Cluj-Gherla diocese, I. Hossu.

<sup>71</sup> See pp. 2-3 of this article.

<sup>72</sup> In a request addressed to the Military Court from Cluj from the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1963, bishop Rusu stated that he was arrested on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1956 from Cocoș Monastery and then taken to the Securitate from Cluj where he was registered only on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1957. ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 13, f. 2-2v.

<sup>73</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 1, f. 5-23. On the cover of the investigation file (no. 313) opened on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1957 there are mentioned two names, Rusu Alexandru and Dârlea Silvia.



Legionnaire Movement<sup>74</sup> arrested in June 1948 because she might have had connections to the fugitive legionnaires followed by the Securitate. After her release, in 1953, she settled down in Cluj<sup>75</sup>. The choice of the city wasn't by chance. During her detention, specifically in the period when she was in the prison from Târgșor, S. Dârlea met Agapia (Pia) Chindriș, a Greek-Catholic nun, priest V. Chindriș's sister. Gradually she "gained an admiration" for the priest and "offered to do him small services connected to the cult [Greek-Catholic] clandestinely", as she would declare during the investigation. "The small services" consisted of helping priest Chindriș to catechize some children, and in August 1956 she participated in the multiplying of the petitions that would then be signed by believers in order to help the Uniate Church become legal again<sup>76</sup>. However, for the investigators, more important than "the activity performed in Greek-Catholic underground" is the political biography before and after the war of S. Dârlea because it could be more easily inserted in bishop Rusu's trial of building his political guilt.

The evolution of the investigation and the formulation of new accusations against this one are reflected in the reports in which the Securitate's investigators request the extension of the investigation period and keeping the bishop in custody. For example, in the report from the 28<sup>th</sup> of January the investigators "sustained" that they had established that in the summer of 1955, the three bishops started the "underground reorganizing of the former Greek-Catholic dioceses", that in 1956 through "leaflets" and "memoirs" which he spread publicly, bishop Rusu "instigated" the "former believers" "against the laws of the country", respectively of the Decree no. 358 and that he brought a "a series of defamations against the popular democracy regime from our country". In the quoted document, it was formulated, for the first time the accusation of transmissions of "information and of different secret data" to diplomats of the French and American legation from Bucharest with "whom he got in touch secretly at Curtea de Argeș monastery"<sup>77</sup>. For the documentation of the last accusation, the investigators proposed the arrest and investigation of bishops I. Hossu and

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<sup>74</sup> The generic name of a far right organization known under many names - The Archangel Michael's Legion, The Iron Guard, „Everything for the country” Party - established in 1927 by Corneliu Z. Codreanu. For the genesis and the evolution of this organization see Armin Heinen, *Legiunea „Arhanghelului Mihail”. Mișcare socială și organizație politică. O contribuție la problema fascismului internațional*, traducere din lb. germană Cornelia și Delia Eșianu, București, Humanitas, 1999, 546 p.

<sup>75</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 1, f. 334.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 319, 353.

<sup>77</sup> For the circumstances in which the meeting with the French diplomat took place see p. 121.

I. Bălan because these ones also offered information to the western diplomats, a request that wasn't accepted by the central structures of the Securitate. Besides, in the following reports the proposal wasn't mentioned anymore.<sup>78</sup>

According to the Law no. 3/4 April 1956 the indictment realized by the authorities that led the criminal investigation had to be communicated to the accused in 24 hours from the moment of detention, in 20 days in what concerns the cases connected to the state's security, and in exceptional cases, the period could be extended<sup>79</sup>. In the case of bishop Rusu this procedure was accomplished on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March, namely, after more than two months from the beginning of the investigation. "Enough evidence" resulted from the investigation, according to the ordinance, that bishop Rusu in May or June [sic!] established connections with a French diplomat with the help of whom, together with I. Bălan and I. Hossu, "transmitted different information regarding the measures taken by the government against the Greek-Catholic cult and this one's leaders, regarding the treatment applied to the former bishops, as well as to some priests and believers", as well as some information regarding the places in which they "were imprisoned preventively". Also, through priest Remus Ilie<sup>80</sup> he transmitted to the US legation two copies of the memoirs addressed to S. Nițulescu, the president of the Association for UN from the PRR and the Ministry of Cults, which had a "defamatory and biased content". Through his gesture he aimed to offer the United States the possibility to intervene in the RPR internal affairs, in order to restore the legality of the Greek-Catholic cult. Since 1955, it was also stated in the document, that bishop Rusu would have passed on to the reorganizing of the old dioceses, naming clandestine vicars "in order to coordinate hostile activity against the laws of the country". At the same time, "orally and in writing" urged and "instigated" priests and believers to formulate collective memoirs through which to ask for the annulment of the Decree no. 358. Finally, between 1955-1956 "having instigating purposes" he edited different memoirs which he publicly transmitted, thus aiming to provoke a movement which led to abolish the aforementioned decree<sup>81</sup>.

After drafting the conclusions of accusation<sup>82</sup> the investigation dossier of Al. Rusu and S. Dârlea was sent, on 26th March 1957, to the

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 7-8, 9-10.

<sup>79</sup> C. Pintilescu, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>80</sup> Orthodox priest and teacher at the school for religious singers from Curtea de Argeș monastery.

<sup>81</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 1, ff. 22-23.

<sup>82</sup> For rules on drawing conclusions at the end of an investigation charge and their importance, see C. Pintilescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

Military Prosecutor's Office in Cluj for verification and referral to the Court<sup>83</sup>. But two days after, the VIIIth Department of Investigations returns with an address to the Military Prosecutor's Office making reference to the files conjunction: no. 313 referring to Al. Rusu and S. Dârlea and no. 269 related to "Băliban T. and others", the so-called "Al. Rusu Group", sending defendants to court<sup>84</sup>. In the present state of the research, it is hard to tell whether the linkage of the two files, a common practice at the time, was the result of a local decision or was imposed from Bucharest to give more political weight.

The fact is that, although investigators have sought to accuse bishop Rusu of "committing the crime of high treason" punishable by art. 184 of the penal code (PC), the president of the Court which examined the preparatory meeting, on 4th April 1957, if there were sufficient evidence to send the 13 defendants in the Court held that the allegation is not sufficiently documented, as in the case of transmission of documents to the U.S. Legation in the dossier was missing the declaration of priest Remus Ilie, which is why he called his attendance in court. However, a week later, by the conclusion of April 10th, 1957, the Court ordered the trial of bishop Rusu for the three charges brought against him - high treason, spreading of prohibited publications and incitement of decrease public agitation<sup>85</sup>.

In the first day of the trial, May 7<sup>th</sup> 1957, military court began the audition of the 13 defendants. In his cross-examination, bishop Rusu remembered events and incidents in which he was involved or witnessed since his arrest, during October 28th 1948 to the end of 1956, when he was once again arrested. Even if, due to age his memory was not very accurate, bishop Rusu described the facts and actions, placing them in the context of the dramatic recent history of his Church, which he took without hesitation, however refusing the political narrative built up by investigators. He admitted, for instance, his involvement with the other two bishops, in reorganizing the Greek-Catholic dioceses by naming some vicars, but disputed the fact of having given "instructions" to the clergy. According to his statements, he tried only "to steer" over its position towards the situation in which were Greek-Catholics, telling the priests who visited him at Curtea de Argeş that he wrote his letters and memoranda in the case of legalization the

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<sup>83</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 18, f. 98.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 120. For dossiers no. 313 and 269, conclusions of accusation were drawn by cpt. Manea Gruia, the chief of VIIIth Department of Investigations of Securitate/MAI, Cluj, and leut. Virgil Pop, ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 1, ff. 373-423. On March 29, the case was sent to Military Prosecuting Office in Cluj.

<sup>85</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 5, f. 59-60v.

Greek-Catholic Church. Instead, he denied that the memoranda that the bishops have addressed the authorities contained "libellous assertions" as the prosecution claimed. He also denied that he had given the priests "instructions" regarding the preparation of petitions in favour of the Greek-Catholic cult legalization; he only urged them to go to the believers and make them "as they think requests and letters on behalf of the legalization the cult".

The bishop described the meetings that they have had, after their release, with various officials from the Ministry of Cults as well as with other officials; on those occasions he said that "the issue of the Uniate Church began to bake", without the bans. In such a context, he argued, were the actions of bishops in order to legalize the Greek-Catholic cult. As for the French diplomat's visit, bishop Rusu offered a version similar to that described by bishop Hossu in his memoirs as well as with the testimony of the nun Onisifora Rusu<sup>86</sup> from Curtea de Argeş monastery, that had not the chance to blame him. Regarding the documents sent to US legacy by priest Remus Ilie, the bishop admitted the he gave him two copies, but he did not know if they were sent or not. In fact, as we said before, investigators were not sure either that the priest Ilie gave those documents to any American diplomat<sup>87</sup>. Next days the trial continued with the hearing of the other defendants and witnesses.

According to sentence 1202/3th July 1957 of Cluj military court bishop Al. Rusu was convicted of high treason at life prison in hard condition<sup>88</sup> (punishment provided for in art. 184), for spreading of prohibited publications (art. 325/c) and incitement to public agitation (art. 327/align. III) and was condemned for 10 years in jail and confiscation of fortune. According to the criminal procedure code he had to serve the biggest sentence. The other 12 defendants got punishments between 20 years of hard detention (Teofil Băliban<sup>89</sup>) and 6 years of correctional prison

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<sup>86</sup> At Curtea de Argeş bishops have been accommodated in a pavilion under the care of nun Onisifora Rusu. She was cited as a witness during the investigation; see ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 1, ff. 255-257.

<sup>87</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 5, ff. 146-150v. Called as a witness at the trial, priest Remus Ilie will be declared "unable to move" by the authorities.

<sup>88</sup> Considering the age of the bishop Rusu (73 years) on the basis of an article of the code of criminal procedure, the Court ruled that his case should not apply the penalty laid down for high treason, forced labour for life, but life prison in hard conditions. See ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 5, f. 341.

<sup>89</sup> Punishment for that part in the 1930s of the Legionary Movement; for attending events at Cluj on 12 August, he was sentenced to 10 years in correctional prison; according to the Code, he has to execute the longest punishment. For others punishments, see ACNSAS, P Fund 13278, vol. 5 ff. 341v-342v.

(Octavian Ghiurco). The motivation of the sentence, which closely followed the *Guidelines concerning drafting rules*<sup>90</sup>, the Court didn't do than to repeat allegations of investigators. More, in some cases they added items which were not mentioned in the charges of the defendants. For example, in the case of bishop Rusu, the motivation of the sentence said he "in order to attack the independence of our state has got in touch [...] with British and French embassies", although in the inquiry had been mentioned only the meeting with the French diplomat<sup>91</sup>.

Like other condemned in this group<sup>92</sup>, bishop Rusu sent, from Gherla penitentiary where he was imprisoned, an application for acceptance of an appeal against sentence. In the document addressed to Supreme Court/Military College, bishop wrote that he did not considered himself guilty of high treason, he wanted the disposal of that part of the judgment by the Supreme Court and thus free of that "horrible accusation of high treason", an accusation "contrary to his whole life put [...] in the service of the Romanian nation [...]".

He also appreciated that it was not guilty of public incitement because everything that he had done "from the relative freedom on 2nd February 1955 until 13th August 1956, when he was punished with mandatory home at Cocoș monastery, was exclusively related to his right and his duty to help the believers", to exercise freedom of conscience and the free exercise of worship and his actions, and of the other bishops were recognized in the memoir addressed at 8th December 1956, to the leader of Romanian Workers' Party<sup>93</sup>.

By decision no. 467/29th August 1957, the Supreme Court decided to reject the appeals of bishop Rusu and others against the sentence no. 1202/3rd July 1957<sup>94</sup>. Since the sentence remained final, against bishop Rusu was given a term of execution, being 'registered' in Gherla penitentiary<sup>95</sup>.

But the venerable Bishop has not abandoned the confrontation with the communist judiciary system. On 25th November 1957, the director of Gherla penitentiary sent to Military Court in Cluj the application for "review" the trial "detainee Alexandru Rusu". The request written by bishop was based on reasons of form and substance, and illustrates not only the

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<sup>90</sup> It is a document sent by the Ministry of Justice for the ideological orientation of the courts. See C. Pintilescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-76.

<sup>91</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 5, f. 63.

<sup>92</sup> The destiny of the other 12 convicted of "Al. Rusu group" is the subject of another study being prepared.

<sup>93</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 6, ff. 9-9v.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 115.

<sup>95</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 10, ff. 13, 16.

techniques and methods by which investigators were seeking to build political accusations but also an obvious violation of the law.

Among the form reasons, the bishop mentioned the minutes of interrogations which, with very few exceptions, "include not just arbitrary classification, specific to investigators [...] but even biased statements dictated by the chief of department". He signed, however, such proceedings due to "moral pressure and questionable proceedings" he was forced to bear and for that he was told the by prosecutor "that everything will be fixed before the trial". His file, linked for "incomprehensible" reasons for him with that of S. Dârlea, was presented at the end of the investigation, "unstructured and without an agenda" so that it was possible to add new evidences, how it happened indeed, that he never saw, because he could no longer see the file, although he was questioned afterwards. The right to defend himself was "almost completely stolen", in the minutes of the investigation was not allowed to say anything to defence, the request to hire a lawyer was not accepted; he and the ex-officio attorney had a single meeting, in the presence of a security officer. In the court he has been silenced "on the grounds that it is not allowed to make memories".

Among the substance reasons, bishop Rusu requested hearing his two fellows, in order to determine his role in the conversation with the French diplomat, and in the case of documents that he would have sent to the US legacy he required a confrontation with priest Remus Ilie.

In order to prove that during the religious movements in August 1956 in Cluj and surrounding his role was not decisive Al. Rusu required hearing again all those who have made statements in this regard. Thus, he believed, he will demonstrate that his inclusion of "in the group was a mistake and maybe even a setup"<sup>96</sup>. At the meeting on 12th December 1957 of Cluj Military Court for resolution of the request made by Alexandru Rusu, both the applicant, represented by lawyer ex officio, and the Military Prosecutor's Office requested and the court admitted a postponement citing lack of dossier, to January 10, 1958. On this date the Court decided to dismiss the application, keeping the sentence<sup>97</sup>. Bishop Rusu And appealed also on January 18th, 1958, his request, drafted on 20 January in Gherla penitentiary being transmitted to Supreme Court, the grounds of appeal being filed, again, by a lawyer appointed ex officio<sup>98</sup>. But, once again, the meeting of 28th March 1958 of Supreme Court rejected the appeal brought by bishop Rusu<sup>99</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> ACNSAS Fund P 13278, vol. 9, f. 2-3v.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 6, 11-12.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 14-16v, 19-23.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 24-27.

The last episode of the bishop's confrontation with communist bureaucratic system took place in the first part of the year 1963. As a consequence of the application of Decree No. 5/3rd January 1963, jail life was commuted to 25 years heavy jail<sup>100</sup>. Thus, on 20th March 1963, being in Gherla, bishop Rusu addressed to Military Court of Cluj an application requesting deduction of preventive arrest (October 29, 1948 - February 5, 1955), the period during which he was at Cocos monastery and detention in Cluj to the pronouncement of sentence dated 3 July 1957<sup>101</sup>. His claim was admitted by the Military Court of Cluj which, in order to solve it, asked information from the central structures of Securitate/Internal Affairs<sup>102</sup>, referring to detention, the acts for which he was detained and on what legal basis; the first term of court was set for April 12. However, the Court was forced to postpone the settlement demand dropping more court time because required information has not been received<sup>103</sup>. If the population department conveyed, finally, some information, but not enough to resolve the case<sup>104</sup>, UM 0123/E of Securitate not even confirmed receipt of requests sent by the Military Court of Cluj. It's hard to believe that the absence of an answer from this structure was possible without the consent of the upper departments of the Communist Party and Securitate. The end of this last initiative of bishop Rusu is reported in the public meeting of the Military Court on 12 June 1963, when notified by Gherla Prison, with the address of 29 May, it is stated the death of "prisoner Rusu" on 9th May, admitting "cancellation of the application, because of the death of the petitioner"<sup>105</sup>.

As we said before, bishop Alexandru Rusu was not the first nor the only Greek Catholic bishop who died in detention or as a result of brutal treatment to which he was subjected during the investigation, but he was the only one of the titular bishops in 1948 who was arrested, charged and convicted by communist justice.

In this study we tried to argue that the reasons for the trial and conviction of bishop Alexandru Rusu can be understood only if they are considered in the internal and international background of the first half of the sixth decade of the last century. Limited internal relaxation that had as consequence the release of some of the Greek-Catholic priests arrested in the

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<sup>100</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 18, f. 126-127, see also vol. 15, ff. 100, 115.

<sup>101</sup> ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 13, ff. 1-2v.

<sup>102</sup> It is UM 0123/E Bucharest related to Securitate and Ministry of Internal Affairs/Department of population record. ACNSAS, Fund P 13278, vol. 13, f. 3.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 7, 8, 12, 14-15, 20, 25, 27.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 18.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 31-31v.

late 1940s in the context of the annihilation of the Uniate Church and the “relative freedom” of the three bishops maintained hope for Greek Catholics about the church's legalization. However, authorities did not intend a moment to go so far with concessions, and their reaction against the movement of summer 1956 has abundantly demonstrated it. Moreover, since the autumn of 1956, the Uniate Church has faced a new wave of persecution, communist justice playing a central role, fact illustrated by the numerous lawsuits and convictions of certain Greek-Catholic priests, particularly those involved in the movement of 1956.



# Le pèlerinage et la dimension institutionnelle de la religion. Le cas de la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This paper intends to deal with the manner in which a religious institution, the Romanian Orthodox Church, uses pilgrimage as an instrument for approaching global and local contexts characterized by fluidity, loss of meaning and continuous transformations regarding authority, with consequences in the religious field. Focusing on the case of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis for Western and Southern Europe, the study uses discourse analysis in order to show how pilgrimage is shaped and absorbed into the religious institution's "politics of survival" after 1989.

**Keywords:** *pilgrimage, relics, ecumenism, religious institution, Romanian Orthodox Metropolis for Western and Southern Europe*

**Rezumat:** *Pelerinajul și dimensiunea instituțională a religiei. Cazul Mitropoliei Ortodoxe Române a Europei Occidentale și Meridionale.* Această lucrare intenționează să trateze maniera în care o instituție religioasă, Biserica Ortodoxă Română, folosește pelerinajul drept instrument în abordarea unor contexte globale și locale caracterizate prin fluiditate, pierdere a sensului și continue transformări privind autoritatea, având consecințe și în sfera religioasă. Concentrându-se asupra cazului Mitropoliei Ortodoxe Române a Europei Occidentale și Meridionale, studiul folosește analiza de discurs pentru a ilustra modul în care pelerinajul este modelat și absorbit în cadrul « politicilor de supraviețuire » ale instituției religioase după 1989.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *pelerinaj, moaște, ecumenism, instituții religioase, Mitropolia ortodoxă română pentru Europa de Vest și de Sud*

## Introduction

La sociologie de la religion s'est trouvée longtemps sous la domination de la théorie de la sécularisation, qui, dans sa formulation « classique », fondée

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sur l'exemple de l'Europe Occidentale<sup>2</sup>, identifiait une série de conséquences négatives pour la religion dans le contexte de la modernité avancée<sup>3</sup>. Les années '70 ont produit une série de fissures en demandant plusieurs reformulations et redéfinitions des concepts, le débat étant déplacé ainsi sur le terrain de ce que Grace Davie appelait « le changement de paradigme dans la sociologie des religions »<sup>4</sup>. On peut retenir dans ce contexte l'affirmation du sociologue français Danièle Hervieu-Léger que « la sécularisation n'est pas la perte de la religion dans le monde moderne ; c'est l'ensemble des processus de réaménagements du croire qui se produisent dans une société dont le moteur est l'inassouvissement des attentes qu'elle suscite et dont la condition quotidienne est l'incertitude qui résulte de la recherche interminable des moyens de satisfaire ces attentes »<sup>5</sup>. La crise n'est pas celle de croire ou non, mais de croire ensemble comme bien remarque Michel Meslin<sup>6</sup>. Le problème du déplacement du sacré, de la religiosité, du sens, autrefois sous le contrôle de la religion-institution gagne son place dans la sociologie contemporaine. De cette perspective, la crise est considérée être un problème de la religion-institution et pas du religieux qui identifie les formes les plus diverses pour se manifester dans le contexte de la modernité. Mais quelles sont (si elles existent) les politiques de « survie » des institutions religieuses dans ce contexte de la fluidité, des redéfinitions et de réaménagements continus ? Ont-elles aucun « succès » ? Dans son travail, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, José Casanova mentionnait un set de principes qui une fois respectés donnaient aux institutions religieuses traditionnelles<sup>7</sup> la possibilité de conserver leur pertinence dans l'espace public, pendant que Peter Berger identifiait des « politiques » concrètes de « survie » devant la modernité<sup>8</sup>. Quand même, approchant le cas de l'Église

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<sup>2</sup> David Martin, « Remise en question de la théorie de la sécularisation », en *Identités religieuses en Europe*, Grace Davie, Danièle Hervieu-Léger (coord.), Paris, Éditions de la Découverte, 1996, p.25.

<sup>3</sup> En citant Peter Berger, Danièle Hervieu-Léger mentionnait quelques unes de ces conséquences : « la disparition des Églises de la scène publique, la séparation entre religieux et politique, le déclin des pratiques religieuses, la privatisation du sentiment religieux », Danièle Hervieu-Léger, « La religion des Européens : modernité, religion, sécularisation », en *Identités religieuses en Europe*, p.10.

<sup>4</sup> Grace Davie, *The Sociology of Religion*, London, Sage Publications, 2007, p.64.

<sup>5</sup> Danièle Hervieu-Léger, « La religion des Européens... », p.19.

<sup>6</sup> Michel Meslin, « Simples variations sur le thème 'religion' », en *Recherches de science religieuse*, vol.94, n° 4, 2006, p.529.

<sup>7</sup> José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1994.

<sup>8</sup> Peter L. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World : A Global Overview", en *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Peter L. Berger (ed.), Ethics and Public Policy Center and Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999, pp.3-8.

Catholique de France, le sociologue Danièle Hervieu-Léger proclame « la fin d'un monde »<sup>9</sup>.

L'Église Orthodoxe Roumaine, selon les recensements<sup>10</sup>, l'Église majoritaire des Roumains et selon les sondages d'opinion, l'institution publique dont les citoyens déclarent (encore) être les plus confiants<sup>11</sup>, avait connu elle-même des réorganisations pendant la période suivante aux événements de décembre 1989. Cette étude essaie d'illustrer la manière dont l'institution religieuse a découvert dans la pratique du pèlerinage un instrument utile dans sa lutte pour « survivre » dans un contexte global et local d'une fluidité extrême en ce qui concerne l'autorité, les repères et les significations, manifestée soit sous la forme de la diminution, soit sous la forme de la désinstitutionalisation du religieux. L'analyse met une attention particulière sur le cas de la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale, structure ecclésiale subordonnée au Patriarcat Roumain qui comprend les paroisses orthodoxes roumaines de dix pays de l'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale. Basé sur un corpus de textes publiés dans *Ziarul Lumina*, quotidien du Patriarcat Roumain, *Apostolia* et *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, publications officielles de la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale, *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, publication d'une Association orthodoxe de Bretagne, et sur les sites officielles des Évêchés de la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale, l'étude emploie l'analyse du discours pour illustrer la manière dont la pratique du pèlerinage est appelée, transformée et absorbée au cadre des stratégies de l'institution religieuse après 1989.

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<sup>9</sup> Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Catholicisme, la fin d'un monde*, Paris, Bayard, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> "Recensământul Populației și al Locuințelor. Populația după Religie - 1992 », <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/istoric/vizualizati-rezultate-rpl-1992-si-2002/>, vérifié le 6 Octobre 2012. « Recensământul populației și al locuințelor, 18-27 martie 2002. Volumul IV: Structură Etnică și Confesională », [http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/index\\_rpl2002.htm](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/index_rpl2002.htm), vérifié le 6 Octobre 2012. « Comunicat de presă 24 august 2012 privind rezultatele preliminare ale Recensământului Populației și al Locuințelor, 2011 », [http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Comunicat-presa\\_Rezultate-preliminare.pdf](http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Comunicat-presa_Rezultate-preliminare.pdf), vérifié le 6 Octobre 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Natalia Vlas, Sergiu Gherghina, "Convergence or replacement? Attitudes towards political and religious institutions in contemporary Romania", en *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol.VIII, n° 24, 2009, pp.70-94. Quand même, les plus récents sondages d'opinion montrent une significative diminution de la confiance des Roumains à l'égard de l'institution religieuse : d'environ 80% pour les années 1990 jusqu'à 65,2% pour septembre 2013. Voir « Septembrie 2013 - Încrederea în instituții », disponible sur <http://www.inscop.ro/septembrie-2013-increderea-in-instituti/>, vérifié le 15 Octobre 2013.

### La pratique du pèlerinage dans la Roumanie contemporaine

John C. Olin définit le pèlerinage comme « un voyage ayant comme destination une tombe ou un lieu sacré, fait comme un acte de dévotion religieuse »<sup>12</sup>. Étudiant le cas des pèlerinages en Pologne postcommuniste Marysia Galbraith part de l'hypothèse que « le pèlerinage est un domaine riche pour examiner la relation entre pouvoir, identité et expérience personnelle »<sup>13</sup>. L'auteure souligne aussi une des fonctions que la pratique du pèlerinage peut avoir pour la religion-institution : « à l'aide des icônes, des symboles et des narrations les organisateurs essayent renforcer l'attachement envers des entités abstraites comme l'Église et la nation »<sup>14</sup>.

Dans le paysage académique roumain le sujet n'est que marginalement approché. Dans plusieurs articles dédiés aux pèlerinages à Prislop (la tombe du père Arsenie Boca) et à Iasi (les reliques de Sainte Parascève) publiés en *Revista 22* et plus tard dans le volume *Religia în fapt. Studii, schițe și momente*<sup>15</sup>, le sociologue Mirel Bănică a essayé identifier les causes, les implications, les étapes et les formes que ce phénomène a connu en Roumanie pendant les dernières années. Considérant le pèlerinage un terrain riche pour l'étude des recompositions du religieux, des évolutions connues par l'orthodoxie et même par la société roumaine après 1989<sup>16</sup>, l'auteur l'explique, au moins partiellement, comme une conséquence de la recherche du sens expérimentée par les individus qui « se sentent perdus, égarés », autrement dit comme part de leur « politiques de survie » auxquelles l'institution religieuse a essayé donner une réponse et, parfois s'adapter sans ignorer en même temps les bénéfices d'ordre matériel du phénomène<sup>17</sup>. Le sociologue propose et décrit quatre catégories de pèlerins en considérant les années 1995-1996 le début

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<sup>12</sup> John C. Olin, "The Idea of Pilgrimage in the Experience of Ignatius Loyola", en *Church History*, vol.48, n° 4, 1979, p.387.

<sup>13</sup> Marysia Galbraith, "On the Road to Czestochowa: Rhetoric and Experience on a Polish Pilgrimage", en *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol.73, n° 2, 2000, p.61.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>15</sup> Mirel Bănică, *Religia în fapt. Studii, schițe și momente*, Cluj-Napoca, Eikon, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> "il s'agit d'un concentré de Roumanie", « il représente une des 'reflets' de notre société en transition », Mirel Bănică, « Din nou la Prislop. Religie, societate, tranziție », en *Revista 22*, le 11 décembre 2012, <http://www.revista22.ro/din-nou-la-prislop-religie-societate-tranziție-21060.html>, vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013. Voir aussi, Idem, « Recursul la religie: practica pelerinajelor în România contemporană », en *Revista 22*, le 25 Novembre 2011, <http://www.revista22.ro/recursul-la-religie-practica-pelerinajelor-n-romnia-contemporana-11740.html>, vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Răzvan Bucuroiu, « Pelerinajele, un barometru al credinței. Interviu cu sociologul Mirel Bănică », en *Lumea credinței*, n° 5 (106), 2012, [http://www.lumeacredintei.com/sct\\_6/c\\_1/art\\_1317/pelerinajele\\_un\\_barometru\\_al\\_credinei\\_interviu\\_cu\\_sociologul\\_mirel\\_bnic.htm](http://www.lumeacredintei.com/sct_6/c_1/art_1317/pelerinajele_un_barometru_al_credinei_interviu_cu_sociologul_mirel_bnic.htm), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

significatif de ce type de pratique, avec un « climax » entre 2004 et 2005 et un déclin du point de vu du nombre des pèlerins après 2008<sup>18</sup>.

Bien que existantes avant 1989 le pèlerinage et la vénération des reliques n'ont pas eu l'ampleur et la fréquence qu'ils ont connus pendant la période qui a suivi la chute du régime communiste en Roumanie<sup>19</sup>. Pendant le pèlerinage de 14 Octobre de Iasi, où se trouvent les reliques de Sainte Parascève, on estime chaque année une participation « de quelques cents milles personnes »<sup>20</sup> et la situation est similaire pour les autres lieux de pèlerinage où se trouvent des reliques, des icônes miraculeuses<sup>21</sup> ou des grands confesseurs<sup>22</sup>.

Le Patriarche Daniel décrit le pèlerinage comme « une constante de l'humanité » ayant comme destinations « les lieux saints bibliques, les tombes des martyres, les reliques des saints, les icônes miraculeuses ou les lieux où vivent des pères spirituels »<sup>23</sup>. Sur la manière dont l'institution religieuse a géré des pratiques comme le pèlerinage et la vénération des reliques après 1989 les analyses manquent pour le moment<sup>24</sup>. L'expression la plus claire des efforts du Patriarcat Roumain d'institutionnaliser ces types de pratiques est la création en 2007 d'une Agence de Pèlerinage, « Basilica Travel »,<sup>25</sup> et d'un Centre de Pèlerinage « Sfântul Apostol Pavel » (« Le Saint Apôtre Paul »). L'architecture de l'institutionnalisation du pèlerinage est complétée par la création des centres de pèlerinage locaux<sup>26</sup> quelques uns même avant 2007<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Răzvan Bucuroiu, loc. cit. Voir aussi Mirel Bănică, « Pelerinul de autocar și viitorul ortodoxiei. Mănăstirea Prislop, noiembrie 2010 », en *Revista 22*, le 14 décembre 2010, <http://www.revista22.ro/pelerinul-de-autocar-si-viitorul-ortodoxiei-manastirea-prislop-noiembrie-2010-9558.html>, vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Ioanichie Bălan mentionne le fait que le pèlerinage ayant comme but la vénération des reliques de Sainte Parascève « date depuis le 2 juin 1402 quand les saintes reliques ont été transférées de Cetatea Albă à Suceava », Ioanichie Bălan, *Sfintele moaște din România, Mănăstirea Sihăstria*, 2004, p.28.

<sup>20</sup> *Sfânta Cuvioasă Parascheva cu Sfintele Moaște la Iași*, Bucarest, Sofia, 2009, p.107.

<sup>21</sup> Le cas du monastère Nicula est peut être le plus illustratif.

<sup>22</sup> Carmen Raluca Șerban, *Pelerin la mănăstirile și schiturile dobrogene*, Constanta, Tomis, 2004, p.47.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, « Călătorind cu Dumnezeu. Înțelesul și folosul pelerinajului », <http://www.pelerinaj.ro/intelesul-pelerinajului.html>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Des références sont faites par le sociologue Mirel Bănică, mais ses préoccupations visent premièrement les manifestations de la religiosité individuelle et collective associées à ces types de pratiques.

<sup>25</sup> « Despre noi », <http://www.basilicatravel.ro/despre-noi.html>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012.

<sup>26</sup> « Centrul de Pelerinaj « Sfânta Parascheva » al Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei », [http://www.centruldepelerinaj.ro/ro/despre\\_noi.html](http://www.centruldepelerinaj.ro/ro/despre_noi.html), vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012.

Généralement, les offres des centres de pèlerinage sont similaires avec celles des agences de tourisme laïques, réussissant s'adapter d'une manière intéressante aux demandes du marché au moins en ce qui concerne le niveau de confort<sup>28</sup> et la variété des activités proposées pour compléter les activités au caractère religieux<sup>29</sup>. L'adaptation peut être observée aussi au niveau de la terminologie employée dans la présentation des offres, qui ne diffèrent significativement par comparaison avec les formules utilisées par les agences de tourisme laïques, réalisant ainsi une combinaison intéressante entre le langage économique adapté au marché du tourisme et un discours qui appelle des concepts religieux<sup>30</sup>. Cet effort d'institutionnaliser une pratique développée, au moins après 1989, principalement hors les structures institutionnelles peut être expliquée partiellement à l'aide des intentions de l'institution religieuse d'éliminer une certaine concurrence représentée par d'autres agences ou « quasi-organismes de pèlerinages qui sont intéressés seulement par les gains d'ordre matériel »<sup>31</sup>. De cette perspective, l'Église assume une obligation (morale ? pastorale ?) en relation avec ses fidèles, pour les offrir une alternative aux celles « déjà existantes sur le marché du tourisme en Roumanie », qui utilisent le pèlerinage seulement pour faire leurs offres plus attirantes mais « qui n'ont rien en commun avec la dimension religieuse et formative du participant ». En même temps avec cet effort de s'adapter au marché, on peut observer également une série de textes dans lesquelles les représentants de l'institution religieuse soulignent justement l'importance du pèlerinage « vécu intensément et compris

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« Centrul de Pelerinaje Renașterea », <http://www.mitropolia-clujului.ro/Pelerinaje-Renasterea.html>, verificat la 10.02.2013. « Arhiepiscopia Râmnicului. Centrul de Pelerinaj 'Sfântul Voievod Constantin Brâncoveanu », <http://pelerinaje-valcea.ro/despre-noi>, verificat le 10 Février 2013.

<sup>27</sup> « Centrul de Pelerinaj « Sfântul Nicodim », Mitropolia Olteniei. Despre noi », <http://www.pelerinaje.ro/despre-noi/>, verificat le 12 Novembre 2012

<sup>28</sup> Voir par exemple l'offre du Centre de Pèlerinage « Renașterea » de la Métropole de Cluj, Alba, Crișana et Maramureș.

<sup>29</sup> La plupart des offres des Centres de Pèlerinage proposent des activités de repos et traitement, voir par exemple Carmen Raluca Șerban, *op. cit.*, pp.41-43. Des autres catégories d'activités que les centres de pèlerinage proposent sont celles qui visent particulièrement les jeunes impliquant des formes d'éducation religieuse ou simplement encourageant la socialisation au cadre de la communauté orthodoxe.

<sup>30</sup> Voir par exemple le texte de Constantin Ciofu, « IPS Teofan va sfinți sediul Compartimentului « Pelerinaje și Turism » al Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 15 Mars 2011, <http://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/activitatea-noastra-presupune-promovarea-credintei-crestine>, verificat le 10 Novembre 2012.

<sup>31</sup> « Centrul de Pelerinaj Sfântul Apostol Pavel. Ce ne propunem ? », <http://www.pelerinaj.ro/despre-noi.html>, verificat le 15 Novembre 2012.

correctement »<sup>32</sup> qui peut être affecté ou détourné par toute autre type d'activité y compris l'achat des objets liturgiques »<sup>33</sup>.

Un autre indice pour le fait que l'institution religieuse donne une attention considérable depuis quelques années à la manière dont le pèlerinage est organisé peut être la variété des destinations<sup>34</sup> et des objectifs de type religieux visés<sup>35</sup> ou des catégories humaines<sup>36</sup> auxquelles s'adresse le pèlerinage institutionnalisé. Un aspect important à mentionner en ce qui concerne l'effort d'assumer le contrôle institutionnel sur les pratiques du pèlerinage après 1989 est lié à ce que le sociologue Mirel Bănică appelait par « exemple de symphonie byzantine locale »<sup>37</sup>, autrement dit l'association des autorités de l'État aux plusieurs activités concernant l'organisation et le déroulement des pèlerinages, soit qu'on parle de l'aide financier ou de nature logistique<sup>38</sup>.

Bien que l'Église comprenne l'opportunité que ce type de pratique peut représenter pour « la revitalisation du sentiment religieux » de la population et implicitement pour l'attachement des fidèles pour l'institution religieuse, elle explore assez peu les composantes catéchétiques et social-philanthropiques associées avec la pratique du pèlerinage<sup>39</sup>. De plus, pour le territoire de la Roumanie, comme suggèrent aussi les analyses du sociologue Mirel Bănică, le pèlerinage, malgré les efforts de l'Église d'imposer son monopôle, reste dans une proportion considérable une pratique populaire.

<sup>32</sup> Daniel, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, "Călătorind cu Dumnezeu... ».

<sup>33</sup> Eugen Rogoti, « Pelerinaj spre Împărăția lui Dumnezeu », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 26 Octobre 2011, <http://ziarullumina.ro/opinii/pelerinaj-spre-imparatia-lui-dumnezeu>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Le Pays Saint, la Grèce, le Mont Athos, les églises et les monastères très ou peu connus de Roumanie.

<sup>35</sup> Pour mentionner seulement quelques-uns, les lieux bibliques, des saintes reliques, des icônes miraculeuses, des monastères, des tombes des pères considérés saints, des discussions avec des confesseurs.

<sup>36</sup> On peut identifier des pèlerinages qui s'adressent aux diverses catégories d'âge, ou socio - professionnelles, aux détenus, aux personnes infirmes, Voir par exemple, « Activitățile copiilor », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 29 Mai 2011, <http://ziarullumina.ro/pagina-copiilor/activitatile-copiilor-5>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012, « Definiții craioveni, în pelerinaj la mănăstirile mehedintene », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 7 Avril 2011, <http://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/detinitii-craioveni-pelerinaj-la-manastirile-mehedintene>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012. Gheorghe Cioiu, « Terapie Spirituală la Poiana Mare. Pelerinaje pentru pacienții bolnavi psihic », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 1 Octobre 2011, <http://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/pelerinaje-pentru-pacientii-bolnavi-psihic>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Răzvan Bucuroiu, loc. cit.

<sup>38</sup> Voir, *Sfânta Cuvioasă Parascheva...*, p.108.

<sup>39</sup> « Centrul de Pelerinaj Sfântul Apostol Pavel. Ce ne propunem ? », <http://www.pelerinaj.ro/despre-noi.html>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012

### **La Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale et la pratique du pèlerinage**

La fin de la Guerre Froide, la chute des régimes communistes et les transitions qui ont suivi dans le contexte de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale ont été accompagnés par une accélération de la mobilité des populations, mouvement qui n'était en fait que la manifestation d'un phénomène plus ample de la recomposition d'un espace « dominé par la circulation »<sup>40</sup> que la partie central-est européenne a intégré après la chute du mur du Berlin.

Comme remarque Dana Diminescu, « le franchissement du rideau de fer a été pour les Roumains le premier exercice des libertés acquises après la chute du système totalitaire »<sup>41</sup>. Dans les premières années après « la révolution » cinq Roumains d'une mille quittaient le pays à la recherche d'une vie meilleure<sup>42</sup> et en 2008 les estimations donnaient le chiffre de 2,5 millions de Roumains résidant à l'étranger<sup>43</sup>. La « révolution tronquée », les ambiguïtés et les déceptions de la transition, la tentation « d'approcher' un Occident mythifié et interdit jusqu'à une date récente », les opportunités économiques, politiques et administratives<sup>44</sup> sont seulement quelques explications pour la mobilité accélérée de la population roumaine après 1989.

Dès ses premières réunions pendant l'année 1990, le Synode de l'Église Orthodoxe Roumaine a montré sa « préoccupation » pour la situation des communautés de Roumains se trouvant hors les frontières du pays<sup>45</sup>. Pendant les années suivantes le nombre de ces communautés connaîtra une augmentation sans précédent. L'émigration des Roumains après 1989, avec ses proportions perçues dans des termes catastrophiques particulièrement après cinq décennies de « détention », a été vue par les représentants de l'Église comme une « petite hémorragie » qui « entraîne

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<sup>40</sup> Patrick Michel, « Espace ouvert, identités plurielles : les recompositions contemporaines du croire », en *Social Compass*, vol.53, n° 2, 2006, p.230.

<sup>41</sup> Dana Diminescu, « Introduction », en Dana Diminescu (sous la direction de), *'Visibles, mais peu nombreux...'. Les circulations migratoires roumaines*, Paris, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'homme, f.a., p.1.

<sup>42</sup> *Migrația forței de muncă*, sous la direction d'Eugen Blaga, Akos Derzsi, Liana Ramona Moștenescu, Bucarest, Université de Bucarest, 2008, p.9.

<sup>43</sup> Adrian Otovescu, *Români din Italia*, Bucarest, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 2008, p.69.

<sup>44</sup> Dana Diminescu, loc. cit., pp.2, 8. Voir aussi, Vasile Pușcaș, *Căderea României în Balcani. Analize, comentarii, interviuri*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 2000, pp.6-7.

<sup>45</sup> «Ședințele extraordinare ale Sfântului Sinod. Ședința din 3-4 ianuarie 1990», en *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, vol. 108, n° 1-2, 1990, pp.6-7. «Lucrările Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Sesiunea de lucru 3-4 aprilie 1990», en *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, vol.108, n° 3-4, 1990, p.16.



des problèmes pastoraux »<sup>46</sup>. Si l'État n'a pas cherché et n'a trouvé que des réponses tardives, l'Église, qui à son tour perdait ses fidèles, y a trouvé quand même une forte motivation de « sortir » elle-même.

Au début des années 1990 (et dans une certaine mesure, même aujourd'hui) les communautés orthodoxes roumaines de l'étranger peuvent être divisées grossièrement en trois catégories : les nouvelles structures ecclésiales créées après la chute du régime communiste pour « répondre aux besoins spirituels des fidèles émigrés », les paroisses et les diocèses qui après 1945 sont restées sous l'autorité canonique de la Patriarchie de Bucarest ou ont été créées et/ou récupérées par la Patriarchie progressivement pendant les années, et les paroisses et les diocèses qui pendant le régime communiste ont refusé et/ou continuent de refuser de reconnaître l'autorité canonique de l'« Église-Mère ». Les limites entre les catégories, plutôt entre les deux dernières restent encore fluides.

La Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale, comprenant les paroisses de l'Archevêché Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale, de l'Évêché d'Italie et de l'Évêché d'Espagne et de Portugal, est une de cinq structures de ce type de l'Église Orthodoxe Roumaine qui se trouvent hors les frontières de la Roumanie<sup>47</sup>. Un des rôles que l'institution religieuse a assumé pour justifier et motiver sa présence hors les frontières du pays a été celui de remplaçant pour d'autres acteurs (la famille<sup>48</sup>, les amis<sup>49</sup>, les représentants de l'État<sup>50</sup>) qui pour

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<sup>46</sup> "Mitropolia Moldovei a elaborat ghidul preotului care nu vrea să piardă enoriași", <http://www.ziaruldeiasi.ro/local/iasi/mitropolia-moldovei-a-elaborat-ghidul-preotului-care-nu-vrea-sa-piarda-enoriasi~ni3qi8/print>, vérifié le 3 Décembre 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Trois métropoles sur le continent européen (la Métropole de Bessarabie, la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale, la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Allemagne, d'Europe Centrale et du Nord), une Archevêché sur le continent américain et une Évêché pour l'Australie et la Nouvelle Sjaelland, *Statutul pentru organizarea și funcționarea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, [http://www.patriarhia.ro/ro/documente/statutul\\_bor.html](http://www.patriarhia.ro/ro/documente/statutul_bor.html), vérifié le 5 Février 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Mircea Cătălin Dută, « Vizita pastoral-misionară și ecumenică a Prea Fericitului Părinte Patriarh Teoctist în Germania », en *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, vol.121, n° 1-6, 2003, p.99. « Să folosim libertatea pentru a spori cooperarea panortodoxă », interview accordé de Prea Fericitul Părinte Patriarh Daniel revistei rusești 'Spre unitate', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, vol.127, n° 5-8, 2009, p.9.

<sup>49</sup> Aurel Moisiuc, « Citadele românești în America », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 20 Mars 2011, <http://www.ziarullumina.ro/articole;1836;0;54081;0;Citadele-romanesti-in-America.html>, vérifié le 6.07.2012. Narcisa Elena Balaban, « 100 de km pentru Sfânta Liturghie », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 18 Décembre 2011, <http://www.ziarullumina.ro/articole;1840;0;66932;0;100-de-kilometri-pentru-Sfanta-Liturghie.html>, vérifié le 6 Juillet 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Iuliana Conovici, *Ortodoxia în România postcomunistă. Reconstrucția unei identități publice*, vol. I, Cluj-Napoca, Eikon, 2009, p.220.

certaines raisons n'ont pas eu la possibilité ou la volonté de répondre aux besoins des Roumains émigrés.

Le regain du contrôle sur les structures ecclésiales de l'étranger peut être analysé comme un effort de l'institution religieuse de conserver son monopôle sur la vision sur le monde des Roumains dans un contexte d'une mobilité sans précédent. Le nouvel contexte offre à l'Église Orthodoxe Roumaine la possibilité de regagner et de conserver « les territoires » concurrencées ou prédisposées à être concurrencées par d'autres acteurs dans le pays d'origine ; l'Église a essayé s'insérer et jusqu'à un certain point de devenir, redevenir ou rester une ressource accessible pour les émigrés dans leur effort continu de retrouver/reconstruire et conserver leurs identité. Autrement dit, la motivation centrale de l'« émigration » de l'institution religieuse et de son active implication dans la gestion des problèmes des Roumains a été celle de regagner ou de conserver son pertinence comme acteur social.

La tendance d'institutionnaliser la pratique du pèlerinage peut être identifiée d'une manière plus visible dans le cas de la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale par comparaison avec les structures similaires du pays. L'existence du Centre de Pèlerinages de la Métropole et de centres de pèlerinage au niveau des Évêchés est seulement une partie de la dynamique du processus d'institutionnalisation, celle de l'initiative et de l'infrastructure organisationnelle. Les offres de trois centres visent principalement des destinations comme Israël<sup>51</sup>, Grèce<sup>52</sup>, Mont Athos<sup>53</sup> et Roumanie<sup>54</sup> mais également des destinations en Europe Occidentale. Au-delà de cette forme d'institutionnalisation d'en haut de la Métropole/Évêché vers les paroisses et les fidèles une deuxième dynamique est représentée par les efforts de l'institution religieuse d'absorber une série d'initiatives venues pas nécessairement d'en dehors de l'institution mais plutôt de paroisses et associations quasi-laïques vers la Métropole. Cette tendance est illustrée plutôt dans le cas des pèlerinages organisés dans les

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<sup>51</sup> « Pelerinaj în Țara Sfântă (19-26 noiembrie 2012) », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012.

<sup>52</sup> « Centrul de Pelerinaje « Ecclesia » al Episcopiei Spaniei și Portugaliei », <http://www.episcopiaspanieiportugaliei.es/index.php/centrul-ecclesia>, vérifié le 15 Novembre 2012.

<sup>53</sup> « En pèlerinage avec Monseigneur Silouane », *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, n° 165, 2004, p.1.

<sup>54</sup> « Episcopia Spaniei și Portugaliei, în sprijinul credincioșilor ortodocși: Un Centru de pelerinaje pentru diaspora », <http://www.albaceteortodox.es/index.php/viata-duhovniceasca/lumea-crestina/543-episcopia-spaniei-i-portugaliei-in-sprijinul-credincioilor-ortodoci-un-centru-de-pelerinaje-pentru-diaspora>, vérifié le 3 Février 2013.

pays de l'Europe Occidentale ayant comme initiateurs l'Association « Nepsis »<sup>55</sup>, l'Association Orthodoxe Sainte Anne<sup>56</sup>, et l'Association « Axios »<sup>57</sup> pour les pèlerinages organisés en Roumanie. Toutes ces trois associations ayant un rôle organisateur sont elles-mêmes part de la configuration institutionnelle de la Métropole.

De plus, assez illustrative pour la tendance d'institutionnaliser la pratique du pèlerinage est par exemple la formule d'introduire l'événement sur les annonces disséminées par les centres de pèlerinages ou par les associations organisatrices, particulièrement au cas de l'Évêché Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Italie. N'importe la destination, la durée ou l'ampleur de l'évènement, les annonces mentionnent le fait que « le pèlerinage est organisé avec la bénédiction de Sa Sainteté l'Évêque Siluan »<sup>58</sup> en positionnant de cette manière l'évènement dans le cadre institutionnel de

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<sup>55</sup> Nepsis est parfois associée ou s'associe aux activités du Centre de Pèlerinages de la Métropole, soit comme porte-parole de celui-ci, soit comme partie composante en s'occupant des pèlerinages adressés aux jeunes. En fait, Nepsis, comme organisation des jeunes orthodoxes de la Métropole bien qu'elle soit fréquemment comparée avec ASCOR (l'Association des Étudiants Chrétiens Orthodoxes Roumains) est assez différente particulièrement en ce qui concerne la relation avec l'institution religieuse. Si ASCOR est une forme d'organisation/manifestation spécifique du laïc initiée est restée assez indépendante (mais pas en opposition, seulement séparée comme structure) par rapport à l'institution, Nepsis est plutôt la création de l'institution religieuse qui a essayé de cette façon organiser d'une manière cohérente ses jeunes fidèles. Dans « l'historique » de Nepsis est mentionné le fait que « l'Association des jeunes orthodoxes Nepsis a été constituée le 13 novembre 1999 à l'initiative de l'Archevêché Joseph », "Ce este Nepsis", <http://www.episcopiaspanieiportugaliel.es/index.php/ce-este-nepsis>, vérifié le 5 Octobre 2010.

<sup>56</sup> L'Association Sainte Anne a été créée en 2001 « du désir des orthodoxes de Bretagne de mettre en valeur dans leur vie ecclésiale le très riche et très particulier patrimoine chrétien de leur pays », étant de cette manière une structure inter-orthodoxe et pas seulement des Roumains orthodoxes, « Fraternité Orthodoxe Sainte Anne », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 1, p.1. Quand même, de son numéro 4 (2002), le Feuillet de l'Association, « Feuillet Sainte Anne » mentionne sur son première page le fait qu'elle se trouve « sous l'Omophorion de son Éminence le Métropolitain Joseph », « Feuillet Sainte Anne », n° 4, 2002. Le même numéro mentionne le fait que « son Éminence, le Métropolitain Joseph nous a accordé sa bénédiction pour que les Hymnes suivants, œuvre du père Maxime soient utilisés au cours des offices liturgiques », p.16. Dans le numéro 6 du Feuillet on apprend de la présentation de l'Association qu'elle est « membre de la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale », p.6.

<sup>57</sup> L'Association "Axios" créée en décembre 2006, « a comme but de soutenir les personnes se trouvant en souffrance, « MOREOM. Asociații », <http://www.mitropolia.eu/ro/site/79/>, vérifié le 7 Février 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Voir les annonces publiés sur le site du Centre de Pèlerinages de l'Évêché, <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/>.

l'Évêché. La situation peut être identifiée aussi au cas des pèlerinages organisés par la Métropole en Roumanie<sup>59</sup>. « La bénédiction » fonctionne comme une expression de l'autorité de l'institution religieuse mais aussi comme une forme d'identifier et de construire la communion intra-institutionnelle (Évêché – paroisses), mais aussi à l'intérieur du corps ecclésial (institution – laïc) : le pèlerinage est organisé par l'institution et il s'adresse aux ceux qui s'identifient avec celle-ci. Cet aspect peut être plus facilement compris si on pense aux problèmes de concurrence juridictionnelle que la Métropole a eu et a encore<sup>60</sup>.

Souligner l'institutionnalisation des pratiques comme le pèlerinage est importante justement pour montrer l'attention que l'institution religieuse donne à la construction des instruments nécessaires pour sa propre survie comme acteur religieux et social important. Les modalités par lesquelles les pèlerinages déroulés dans l'espace de l'Europe Occidentale et en Roumanie répondent au besoin de l'institution religieuse de rester un acteur pertinent dans l'espace public sont nombreuses et interconnectées. Pour des raisons visant la clarté on a fait une distinction entre quatre types de contextes pour les pèlerinages organisés en Occident et deux pour ceux qui ont comme destination la Roumanie.

### **Le pèlerinage comme manière d'approcher l'Occident**

Comme soulignait le sociologue Mirel Bănică au cas des pèlerinages déroulés en Roumanie après 1989, ceux-ci réunissent « les égarés », qui, comme une conséquence du choc de la transition sont dans la recherche des repères, de la redécouverte du sens, qui appellent le religieux pour remplir un vide ou pour identifier des solutions pour survivre. Pour les Roumains émigrés après 1989 dans les pays de l'Europe Occidentale le choc a été double, la transition échouée en Roumanie a été suivie par la nécessité de faire face à un contexte étranger et peu familier. Dans ce cadre de la fluidité,

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<sup>59</sup> « Avec la bénédiction de son Éminence le Métropolitain Joseph, le Centre de Pèlerinages de la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale vous propose une expérience spirituelle en Roumanie », « Pelerinaj în România de Sfintele Paști », <http://www.mitropolia.eu/ro/stiri/507/11-18-aprilie-2012--pelerinaj-in-romania-de-sfintele-pati.htm>, vérifié le 3 Février 2013. Voir aussi « 3-12 iulie 2012 – Pelerinaj în Bucovina », <http://www.mitropolia.eu/ro/stiri/569/3-12-iulie-2012-pelerinaj-in-bucovina.htm>, vérifié le 3 Février 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Il s'agit des communautés orthodoxes roumaines qui pour une longue période de temps, et plutôt en Italie, encore refusent l'autorité canonique du Patriarcat de Bucarest et implicitement la juridiction de la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine de l'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale. En Italie particulièrement ces communautés ont choisi la juridiction du Patriarcat de Constantinople.

des activités comme les pèlerinages comme forme d'exprimer la religiosité deviennent des pratiques par lesquelles l'institution religieuse, par son monopôle de plus en plus visible sur l'organisation, assume un rôle central dans la construction des politiques de survie<sup>61</sup>. Comme fournisseur de ressources symboliques et religieuses où le pèlerinage est en fait un des plusieurs canaux par lequel se fait la communication avec le sacré, l'institution religieuse mise sur la construction et la conservation de l'attachement des fidèles. Ayant le monopôle sur les canaux de médiation du contact avec le sacré<sup>62</sup>, avec le sens, l'institution religieuse essaie de conserver en fait son pertinence.

Au-delà du rôle de fournisseur de biens symboliques que l'institution religieuse assume au cas des pèlerinages, un autre aspect par lequel ceux-ci deviennent des contextes utiles est représenté par l'exercice de la socialisation au cadre de la communauté soit-elle orthodoxe, inter-orthodoxe ou interchrétienne. Offrant le cadre pour la socialisation, l'Église ne réalise seulement l'interconnexion entre certaines formes de manifestation de la religiosité avec diverses formes d'interaction (l'agape, les promenades en nature<sup>63</sup>, les programmes culturelles – les danses, les chantes<sup>64</sup>), mais elle réussit aussi assumer leur encadrement. Autrement dit, l'Église est associée avec l'espace de la familiarité et de la construction de la communauté<sup>65</sup>, des relations avec les autres, comme manière d'approcher la situation d'immigré.

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<sup>61</sup> "(...) on est revenu à Trento avec les âmes caressées et pleines de force pour affronter en paix et joie tous ce que la vie nous offre chaque jour », Magdalena Luca, « Pelegrinajul la Padova, moment de bucurie sufletească », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/?p=304>, vérifié le 3 Février 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Voir par exemple les impressions des pèlerins, « Ce pèlerinage a été une plaisante expérience d'union avec Christ », « je crois commencer mieux comprendre le mot qui dit qu'on nous appelle pour nous sanctifier », « Pelerinaj Nepsis la Mănăstirea de la Bussy en Othe », *Apostolia*, 2011, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_535/pelerinaj-nepsis-la-manastirea-de-la-bussy-en-othe.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_535/pelerinaj-nepsis-la-manastirea-de-la-bussy-en-othe.html), vérifié le 10 Novembre 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Zezi, ca exemplu, Mihai Motfolea, « Tinerii din Nepsis în pelerinaj la Terni, cu ocazia hramului parohiei », *Apostolia*, 2010, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_442/tinerii-din-nepsis-in-pelerinaj-la-terni-cu-ocazia-hramului-parohiei.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_442/tinerii-din-nepsis-in-pelerinaj-la-terni-cu-ocazia-hramului-parohiei.html), vérifié le 10 Novembre 2012.

<sup>64</sup> « Tinerii Nepsis în pelerinaj la Albano-Genzano », <http://episcopia-italiei.it/nepsis/?p=614>, vérifié le 3 Février 2013.

<sup>65</sup> « Nous remercions Dieu pour cette grande bénédiction, nous espérons que des moments comme ceux-ci fortifient la communion avec les saints mais aussi la liaison entre nos communautés sur le territoire de l'Italie », Vasile-Timiș Cirié, « Pelerinaj Amalfi-Salerno. Pe urmele sfinților Apostoli Andrei și Matei », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/>, vérifié le 3 Février 2013. « Le pèlerinage a représenté (...) aussi une occasion de communion et d'unité des fidèles pèlerins », Ioan Coman, Ionică Saghin, « Pelerinajul parohiilor din Florența și Prato la Roma », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/?p=302>, vérifié le 15 Février 2013.

Un des exemples les plus suggestifs en ce cas sont les pèlerinages dédiés aux jeunes de Nepsis ayant comme destinations des monastères comme Cantauque<sup>66</sup>, Bussy en Othe<sup>67</sup>, le Saint Jean le Baptiste<sup>68</sup>, le Saint Silouan<sup>69</sup>, Malvialle<sup>70</sup> ou en Irlande<sup>71</sup>, où le contact avec le sacré est accompagné avec une série d'activités catéchétiques.

En ce qui concerne l'association entre la pratique de la vénération des reliques et celle du pèlerinage, l'enjeu de l'institution religieuse vise l'effort d'argumenter le fait que l'orthodoxie n'est pas étrangère pour l'espace de l'Europe Occidentale. Pour cela, l'institution religieuse appelle une forme d'argumentation fondée sur l'existence des traces matérielles : les reliques des saints du premier millénaire chrétien<sup>72</sup>. Ainsi, des nombreux pèlerinages sont organisés aux reliques des saints comme, l'Apôtre Bartholomée, les Saints Docteurs sans Argent Côme et Damien, la Sainte Impératrice Héléne, le Saint Hiéarque Grégoire de Nazianz, le Saint Apôtre Pierre<sup>73</sup>, considérés comme « des saints de notre Église » (orientale)<sup>74</sup> pendant que le Saint Jean Cassien, dont les reliques attirent des pèlerins Roumains à Marseille est considéré « le saint Roumain »<sup>75</sup> ou « pré-Roumain »<sup>76</sup>. Assez fréquentes sont aussi les

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<sup>66</sup> « La Mănăstirea Cantauque de sărbătoarea Pogorării Sfântului Duh », *Apostolia*, 2011, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_583/pelerinaj-nepsis.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_583/pelerinaj-nepsis.html), vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>67</sup> « Pelerinaj Nepsis la Mănăstirea de la Bussy en Othe », *Apostolia*, 2011, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_535/pelerinaj-nepsis-la-manastirea-de-la-bussy-en-othe.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_535/pelerinaj-nepsis-la-manastirea-de-la-bussy-en-othe.html), vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Gabriela Filip, « Cu Nepsis la Londra și în pelerinaj la Mănăstirea Sfântul Ioan Botezătorul, Essex », *Apostolia*, 2010, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_67/cu-nepsis-la-londra-%C5%9Fi-in-pelerinaj-la-manastirea-sfantul-ioan-botezatorul-essex.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_67/cu-nepsis-la-londra-%C5%9Fi-in-pelerinaj-la-manastirea-sfantul-ioan-botezatorul-essex.html), vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Raluca Prelipceanu, « Pelerinaj Nepsis la Mănăstirea Sfântul Siluan », *Apostolia*, 2010, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_950/pelerinaj-nepsis-la-manastirea-sfantul-siluan.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_950/pelerinaj-nepsis-la-manastirea-sfantul-siluan.html), vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>70</sup> « Camp de jeunes à la Malvialle, 7-17 Juillet 2005 », *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, n° 215, 2005, p.5.

<sup>71</sup> « Nepsis-Pelerinaj în Irlanda », <http://lacasuriortodoxe.over-blog.com/article-30225780.html>, vérifié le 20 Novembre 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Centrul de Pelerinaje al Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române a Italiei « Sfinții Apostoli Pentru și Pavel », « 2-3 aprilie 2011. Pelerinaj la Roma », « 9-10 aprilie 2011. Pelerinaj la Roma », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/>, vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Voir par exemple, Marc-Antoine Costa de Beauregard, « Le pèlerinage annuel auprès du Saint Grégoire », *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, n° 168-169, 2004, p.2. Gheorghe Militaru, « Pèlerinage à Sienne », *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, n° 168-169, 2004, p.3. Macarie Drăgoi, « Pèlerinage à Maldon (Essex) », *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, n° 168-169, 2004, p.3.

<sup>74</sup> Voir par exemple, « 2-3 aprilie 2011. Pelerinaj la Roma », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/>, vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Dumitru Horia Ionescu, « Pelerinaj la Marsilia », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 24 Juillet 2011, <http://ziarullumina.ro/jurnal-de-calatorie/pelerinaj-la-marsilia>, vérifié le 20 Novembre 2012.

<sup>76</sup> « Pelerinaj la moaștele Sfântului Ioan Casian – Marsilia, 1-2 mai 2010 », *Apostolia*,

pèlerinages ayant comme but la vénération des saints locaux, le Saint Columban, Apôtre de l'Écosse<sup>77</sup>, le Saint Ciaran (Irlande)<sup>78</sup>, le Saint Elie de Sicile, le Saint Elie de Calabre<sup>79</sup>, Saint Cloud<sup>80</sup>.

Dans ce contexte, assez suggestif est l'exemple de l'Association « Fraternité Orthodoxe Sainte Anne », qui a comme but d'identifier, inventorier et vénérer les reliques de saints chrétiens de Bretagne oubliées, négligées par l'Église Catholique locale ou dont les traces se sont perdues par de diverses autres causes. Intéressante reste l'argumentation devant ces activités. Des articles publiés pendant environ quatre ans dans le feuillet de l'Association on peut apprendre que « les saints de Bretagne » sont part de la « chrétienté celtique de la disparition de laquelle au Xème siècle se fait coupable le Patriarcat de Rome »<sup>81</sup>, chrétienté celtique que « ne peut être que orthodoxe » et dont « la suppression » s'était « superposée avec le triomphe de l'hétérodoxie en Occident »<sup>82</sup>. L'argumentation avance en soulignant le fait que « lorsqu'il a existé une chrétienté celtique autonome les liaisons entre l'Orient et cet extrême Occident n'ont pas été rompues » et « les causes évoquées [par l'Église Catholique] (...) pour discréditer les chrétientés celtiques (même jusqu'au XIXème siècle) ne diffèrent beaucoup aux celles utilisées dans les controverses avec l'Orient chrétien »<sup>83</sup>. De plus, on souligne les similarités entre une série d'éléments composants de la chrétienté celtique et celle du christianisme oriental, parmi d'autres, le vécu authentique de la piété trinitaire<sup>84</sup>. On identifie dans la même source un plaidoyer pour la vénération des saints locaux<sup>85</sup> : « nous aimons et prions tous les saints de la Sainte Église Orthodoxe et nous vénérons particulièrement ceux de nos

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2010, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_459/pelerinaj-la-moastele-sfantului-ioan-casian--marsilia-1-2-mai-2010.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_459/pelerinaj-la-moastele-sfantului-ioan-casian--marsilia-1-2-mai-2010.html), vérifié le 3 Février 2013.

<sup>77</sup> « Credinciosii din Glasgow, în pelerinaj pe insula Iona », *Ziarul Lumina*, le 8 Juin 2011, <http://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/credinciosii-din-glasgow-pelerinaj-pe-insula-iona>, vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>78</sup> « Nepsis-Pelerinaj în Irlanda », <http://lacasuriortodoxe.over-blog.com/article-30225780.html>, vérifié le 20 Novembre 2012.

<sup>79</sup> « Pelerinaj Civitavecchia - Calabria și Bivongi, 30 aprilie-1 mai 2011 », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/>, vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>80</sup> « Vénération des reliques de Saint Cloud », *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, n° 265-266, 2006, p.22.

<sup>81</sup> « Fraternité Orthodoxe Sainte Anne », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 1, p.2.

<sup>82</sup> « Christianisme orthodoxe et chrétienté celtique », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 1, p.5.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, pp.5-7.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, p.7. Vezi și Thierry Jolif, « La tradition chrétienne en terres celtiques », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 6, 2004, pp.23-27.

<sup>85</sup> Pour énumérer seulement quelques uns entre eux, Samson, Corentin, Briec, Malo, Magloire, Lunaire, Meloir, Trémore, Pair, Louthern, Levien, Gildas, Germain d'Auxerre, Colomban.

« Églises mères », mais il nous semble important et conforme à la tradition orthodoxe de porter une attention toute particulière aux saints locaux, ceux par qui le christianisme est arrivé jusqu'à nous »<sup>86</sup>. Dans la même direction de souligner les liaisons entre l'orthodoxie et l'espace de l'Europe Occidentale, en Italie une attention particulière est donnée aux « saints italo-grecs », « des moines de tradition byzantine » émigrés pendant les VIIIème - IXème siècles en Calabre face à l'« oppression iconoclaste et aux attaques des Musulmans »<sup>87</sup>.

L'importance d'associer l'orthodoxie avec les saints locaux est aperçue à Bucarest aussi, où le Synode par le « Temei 3841/2009 » répond de manière positive à la demande des éparchies d'Europe Occidentale d'introduire dans leurs calendriers des saints locaux (« occidentaux ») des régions où ils vivent. La spécification du Synode que les choix devront viser seulement les saints qui ont vécu avant la Grande Schisme est pertinente pour les limites des concessions qu'il est ouvert à accepter<sup>88</sup>.

En ce qui concerne la manière dont la recherche, l'identification et la mise en valeur des « preuves » de la présence orthodoxe en Occident contribuent à soutenir la pertinence de l'institution religieuse, les fidèles et ceux qui s'identifient avec les structures ecclésiales de l'Église Orthodoxe Roumaine voient dans ces reliques pas seulement des traces de la présence orthodoxe en Occident mais aussi des formes par lesquelles eux-mêmes, comme orthodoxes, réussissent gérer la familiarisation avec un espace étranger ou au moins différent, par l'identification avec une orthodoxie qui est « chez soi » en Occident. Il s'agit en fait d'un remarquable potentiel intégratif que l'orthodoxie réussit activer et qu'aucune institution laïque ne peut pas assumer, explorer ou remplacer. « Chez soi » est là où les ancêtres (ici les ancêtres religieux, qui témoignaient la même foi) ont vécu, ou selon la formulation employée par le Centre de pèlerinages de l'Évêché d'Italie « sur le terre sanctifié avec le sang des milles de martyrs des premiers siècles chrétiens »<sup>89</sup>. Une situation particulière, identifiable seulement en France

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<sup>86</sup> « Fraternité Orthodoxe Sainte Anne », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 1, p.2. Voir aussi Prêtre Philippe, « Fraternité Orthodoxe Sainte Anne », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 2, p.1.

<sup>87</sup> "Pelerinaj Civitavecchia - Calabria și Bivongi, 30 aprilie-1 mai 2011 », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/>, vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

<sup>88</sup> "Les Éparchies Orthodoxes Roumains d'Occident, de l'Amérique et de l'Australie feront une liste avec 12 propositions de noms de saints (un pour chaque mois) appartenant à l'Église avant la séparation (jusqu'à 1054), recommandable jusqu'au VIIIème siècle pour éviter la suspicion d'égarement de la vraie foi », « Temei nr.3841/2009 », *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, vol.127, n° 5-8, 2009, p.51.

<sup>89</sup> « 2-3 aprilie 2011. Pelerinaj la Roma », <http://www.episcopia-italiei.it/pelerinaje/>, vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.



sont les pèlerinages annuels à Soultzmatt (Alsace) où se trouve « un Cimetière militaire roumain où reposent en paix 687 soldats roumains tombés au champ d'honneur pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale, et prisonniers de guerre, sur la terre d'Alsace et de Lorraine »<sup>90</sup>. Bien que répondant au même objectif, de faciliter psychologiquement l'intégration des Roumains émigrés dans la société française, par comparaison avec les pèlerinages aux saints/martyrs du premier millénaire (les ancêtres religieux), ce pèlerinage à Soultzmatt<sup>91</sup> met en premier plan la dimension ethnique (les ancêtres ethniques-roumains), c'est-à-dire la roumanité, et en plan second celle religieuse, l'orthodoxie. Les deux restent quand même profondément liées, l'institution misant en fait sur cette liaison-même pour assumer le rôle de gestionnaire de la mémoire de toute forme de présence roumaine sur la terre de France.

Une autre modalité par laquelle la pratique du pèlerinage contribue à la construction de la pertinence sociale de l'institution religieuse est l'exercice et, dans une certaine mesure l'encouragement de l'œcuménisme local, d'en bas. L'importance de l'œcuménisme est visiblement plus significative dans un espace de la pluralité religieuse comme l'Europe Occidentale. Au-delà de l'utilité concrète de la collaboration avec les Églises locales, l'œcuménisme est un autre forme d'intégrer les immigrés dans les sociétés d'accueil grâce au fait qu'il est fondé sur l'exploration des similarités entre « nous » et « les autres »<sup>92</sup>. Au cas des pratiques du pèlerinage et de la vénération des reliques, l'expression de l'œcuménisme est illustrée par le fait que les orthodoxes (soient-ils des Roumains, des Serbes, des Grecs, des Russes) et les catholiques vénèrent pas seulement les mêmes formes matérielles de manifestation du sacré, mais parfois ils les vénèrent ensemble<sup>93</sup>. Ce « ensemble » bien qu'on peut l'identifier au cas

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<sup>90</sup> « Soultzmatt – le pèlerinage annuel », *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, n° 164, 2004, p.3.

<sup>91</sup> D'autres lieux similaires de pèlerinages sont les Cimetières militaires d'Haguenau (Strasbourg) et de Drieuze (Nancy), « Soultzmatt – le pèlerinage annuel », p.3.

<sup>92</sup> « Ainsi, un autre aspect de la vénération des reliques des saints du premier millénaire est mis en valeur, sa dimension œcuménique par la conscience d'un héritage commun », « Les Rencontres de la Fraternité », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 3, p.4.

<sup>93</sup> « Lors des pèlerinages, des catholiques-romains se joignent à nous pour prier. Et ceci est une très bonne chose, la fraternité (il s'agit de l'Association Fraternité Orthodoxe Sainte Anne) désirant être un lieu de rassemblement, de paix. Bien sûr, il ne s'agit pas de faire de « syncrétisme » chrétien ou de l'œcuménisme de mauvais aloi : chacun reste ce qu'il est, dans l'obéissance de ses pasteurs respectifs. Mais dans notre monde déchiré par tant de division il est urgent de donner des témoignages de paix et d'unité. Le but de notre fraternité n'est pas d'ouvrir des débats théologiques sur l'Église. Laissons à nos hiérarques (...) le soin de régler les problèmes ecclésiiaux et de mener l'Église à la pleine unité (...). Quant à nous, réunissons-nous pour prier et tenter de nous aimer les uns les

d'autres types d'activités (sociales, culturelles) il est assez rarement associé aux aspects sacramentaux et c'est justement cela la contribution des pèlerinages et de la vénération des reliques pour la manifestation concrète de l'œcuménisme : les orthodoxes et les catholiques ne se communient ensemble du même Calice et les célébrations et les prières communes ne sont pas assez fréquentes, mais lors qu'on parle des deux pratiques (le pèlerinage et la vénération des reliques), activités qui se trouvent quelque part sur la frontière entre religieux/sacramental et culturel, les différences entre les deux confessions s'estompent. De plus, les deux pratiques contribuent à la construction d'une image de l'institution religieuse comme moteur de la revitalisation du christianisme dans l'espace de l'Europe Occidentale. Redécouvrant et remettant en valeur ces « trésors oubliés » du christianisme universel, l'institution religieuse assume l'exploration d'un contexte d'où les autres institutions religieuses soit se sont retirées, soit ont été placées en plan second par l'apparition des formes de religiosité dés-institutionnalisées.

### **Le pèlerinage comme manière de connaître la Roumanie**

Si on parle de l'ampleur et de la fréquence, les pèlerinages organisés en Roumanie par la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale sont significativement réduits par comparaison avec ceux organisés en Europe Occidentale. Les pèlerinages ayant comme destination la Roumanie peuvent être classifiés en deux types, selon les formes d'activités secondaires associées : les pèlerinages-camp dédiés aux enfants et aux jeunes, qui tombent principalement dans la responsabilité de l'Association Nepsis, et les pèlerinages qui s'adressent aux adultes, principalement des étrangers (convertis ou pas à l'orthodoxie), organisés par l'Association Axios, parfois avec l'aide des volontiers Nepsis.

Comme mentionné ci-dessus, fréquemment, plutôt au cas des jeunes, ces pèlerinages prennent le caractère des camps ou des excursions. Bien que la rencontre avec le sacré, par la vénération des reliques, les discussions avec les pères spirituels, la participation à la liturgie ne manquent pas, ils ne sont quand même la seule motivation du voyage, il existe une autre motivation qui fait la différence entre les activités similaires organisées dans l'espace de l'Europe Occidentale : celle de revoir et de

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autres selon le commandement du Seigneur », Philippe Cales, « Feiz ha Breizh », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 5, 2003, p.2. Voir aussi, Maxime le Diraison, « Editorial », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 6, 2004, pp.3-4. « Une autre de nos convictions est que la vénération des saints du premier millénaire est un lieu, par excellence, œcuménique », Philippe Cales, « Une présentation de la Fraternité Orthodoxe Sainte Anne », *Feuillet Sainte Anne*, n° 6, 2004, p.7.

rétablir une liaison et un contact physique avec le pays d'origine<sup>94</sup>. Ainsi, l'institution religieuse devient le canal par lequel la connaissance de la Roumanie est rendue accessible, l'institution religieuse gère la construction et la conservation de l'identité des émigrés, elle est celle qui fait la sélection du matériel avec lequel la matrice identitaire est remplie. Le pèlerinage en Roumanie n'est seulement un événement ayant des forts poids religieux, mais aussi culturels – la plupart des jeunes, particulièrement les enfants connaissent pour la première fois « le pays natal », dans tous ses aspects concrets : géographie (des excursions dans la montagne<sup>95</sup>, dans le delta etc.), culture, tradition, histoire (des visites aux musées et aux monuments historiques)<sup>96</sup>, la société (la rencontre avec ceux qui sont restés à la maison)<sup>97</sup>.

Concernant cette « confusion » ou contamination entre les deux types d'activités, camp et pèlerinage, et les effets visés par leur interconnexion, assez représentative est l'explication du président de Nepsis, Bogdan Grecu : « (...) beaucoup de temps passé dans la nature, dormir dans le tente, se laver dans les ruisseaux de la montagne, manger au chaudron, de la prière et des contes autour du feu. Il pourra sembler, de cette description, qu'il s'agit d'une simple randonnée dans la montagne. Mais cela implique une ascèse, et on ne parle pas de porter son sac à dos, de ramasser les bois de chauffage, ou de descendre apporter de l'eau pour cuisiner, mais de vivre ensemble dans un groupe de 15 personnes, pendant une semaine. Dans la montagne, lorsqu'on porte sa maison au dos, les limites de chacun deviennent rapidement évidentes, l'énervernement nous guette sans cesse et maintenir une atmosphère sereine dans le groupe devient un exercice d'aimer son proche. Et lorsque cela se fait discrètement, au nom du Christ,

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<sup>94</sup> « Târgu-Jiu : Tineri români din străinătate, în pelerinaj la Tismana », [http://adevarul.ro/locale/targu-jiu/targu-jiu-tineri-romani-strainatate-pelerinaj-tismana-1\\_50ae74087c42d5a6639cd927/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/locale/targu-jiu/targu-jiu-tineri-romani-strainatate-pelerinaj-tismana-1_50ae74087c42d5a6639cd927/index.html), vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012, Bogdan Grecu affirme à cet égard que « les Roumains de l'étranger ont l'occasion de revenir et de visiter des lieux qu'ils n'ont pas vus depuis longtemps ». Voir également, *Pèlerinage en Roumanie, 24 Juillet – 7 Août 2005*, in « Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien », n° 215, 2005, p.5.

<sup>95</sup> « Pelerinaj în România de Sfintele Paști », <http://www.mitropolia.eu/ro/stiri/507/11-18-aprilie-2012--pelerinaj-in-romania-de-sfintele-pasti.htm>, vérifié le 3 Février 2013.

<sup>96</sup> « Tabăra/pelerinaj de vară Nepsis va avea loc în perioada 25 iulie – 2 august 2012 în Moldova și Bucovina », [http://www.rgnpress.ro/rgn\\_12/categorii/cultura--culte/6033-tabarapelerinaj-de-vara-nepsis-va-avea-loc-in-perioada-25-iulie-2-august-2012-in-moldova-si-bucovina.html](http://www.rgnpress.ro/rgn_12/categorii/cultura--culte/6033-tabarapelerinaj-de-vara-nepsis-va-avea-loc-in-perioada-25-iulie-2-august-2012-in-moldova-si-bucovina.html), vérifié le 4 Octobre 2012. Voir aussi « Tabără-Pelerinaj Nepsis. Tismana-Gorj-Olt-Argeș, 10-18 August 2010 », [http://www.mitropolia-ro.de/html/body\\_tabara.html](http://www.mitropolia-ro.de/html/body_tabara.html), vérifié le 4 Octobre 2012.

<sup>97</sup> « Pelerinaj în România de Sfintele Paști », <http://www.mitropolia.eu/ro/stiri/507/11-18-aprilie-2012--pelerinaj-in-romania-de-sfintele-pasti.htm>, vérifié le 3 Février 2013.

une simple sortie dans la montagne peut devenir un pèlerinage »<sup>98</sup>. Pendant le temps, les camps-pèlerinages organisés par la Métropole deviennent « des camps de tradition et spiritualité orthodoxe », où des activités comme les « ateliers » de peinture, théâtre, modelage, musique, dans, les jeux, les randonnées, occupent une place de plus en plus significatif, un groupe d'animateurs s'occupant de l'organisation des événements<sup>99</sup>. De cette façon, les camps-pèlerinages deviennent une voie vers soi-même, une opportunité d'explorer l'intérieur et la relation avec les autres, d'explorer la communauté<sup>100</sup>, ayant en même temps une forte composante formative<sup>101</sup>, donné l'âge jeune des participants visés, composante que l'institution religieuse assume, consciente de l'importance « du prosélytisme à l'intérieur de la communauté », ayant comme enjeu de conserver la liaison avec les jeunes générations dans un monde où « la tradition religieuse n'est plus quelque-chose donnée »<sup>102</sup>. Ainsi, la motivation de l'institution religieuse

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<sup>98</sup> Bogdan Grecu, « Un altfel de pelerinaj », *Apostolia*, 2008, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_161/un-alt-fel-de-pelerinaj.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_161/un-alt-fel-de-pelerinaj.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

<sup>99</sup> Bogdan Grecu, « Mai vrem încă o zi ! Tabăra MOREOM, Neamț, 2009 », *Apostolia*, 2009, [http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol\\_298/%E2%80%9Emai-vrem-inca-o-zi%E2%80%9D-tabara-moreom-neam%C5%A3-2009.html](http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol_298/%E2%80%9Emai-vrem-inca-o-zi%E2%80%9D-tabara-moreom-neam%C5%A3-2009.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013. Voir également, « Pèlerinage en Roumanie, 24 Juillet - 7 Août 2005 », *Feuillet Saint Jean Cassien*, n° 232-235, 2005, p.4.

<sup>100</sup> « Elles [les camps] sont un moyen par lequel au-delà de la multitude de belles choses qu'ils apprennent, les enfants ont l'occasion d'expérimenter l'appartenance à l'Église dans une manière différente qu'ils le font au cadre de la paroisse ou de la famille. De la même manière comme, généralement, les paroisses ne sont pas de communautés de saints, mais ils sont formées de gens ordinaires - chacun avec ses besoins et avec ses recherches - dans ces camps participent des enfants provenant des familles pratiquantes, mais aussi des enfants qui n'ont reçu aucune éducation religieuse au cadre de la famille (mais dont les parents confient dans l'éducation et la protection que l'Église leur offre). (...) entre les enfants se passe une vraie rencontre pendant laquelle ils découvrent ce qui les unit et ce qui le fait uniques, ils se découvrent à eux-mêmes », Bogdan Grecu, « Taberele MOREOM 2010 », *Apostolia*, 2010, [http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol\\_285/taberele-moreom-2010.html](http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol_285/taberele-moreom-2010.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013. « Cette possibilité de socialiser avec d'autres enfants et d'être dans l'Église, d'apprendre les traditions roumaines, est bienvenue », « Tabăra MOREOM Tismana - mărturii », in *Apostolia*, 2010, [http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol\\_287/tabaramoreom-tismana-%E2%80%93marturii.html](http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol_287/tabaramoreom-tismana-%E2%80%93marturii.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

<sup>101</sup> « Vous participez dans ces camps pour apprendre autant de belles choses, autant de choses positives, pour apprendre des prières et des chantes de l'Église. Et celles-ci resteront, s'inscriront dans vos âmes pendant toute votre vie », affirme l'Évêque Serafim à Neamț pendant une des camps de la Métropole, Silviu Cluci, « Bucurați-vă prieteni! Tabăra MOREOM Neamț », *Apostolia*, 2010, [http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol\\_277/bucura%C5%A3i-va-prieteni---tabara-moreom-neam%C5%A3.html](http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol_277/bucura%C5%A3i-va-prieteni---tabara-moreom-neam%C5%A3.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

<sup>102</sup> Voir des idées similaires à Peter L. Berger, « Orthodoxy and Global Pluralism », *Demokratizatsiya*, vol.13, n° 3, 2005, p.445.

pour organiser et promouvoir des événements comme ceux-ci semble être celle « d'entretenir et faire scintiller la flamme »<sup>103</sup> et l'association des aspects d'ordre spirituel avec d'autres types d'activités y contribuent.

Les pèlerinages organisés en Roumanie par Nepsis en collaboration avec l'Association Axios s'adressent principalement aux étrangers, représentant « une bonne occasion pour connaître un visage inconnu de Roumanie », ou, pour les prêtres et les fidèles de la Métropole « de connaître mieux l'Église à laquelle ils appartiennent », pendant que pour les Roumains est « un appel de n'oublier pas leurs racines, leurs saints, leur tradition »<sup>104</sup>.

Plaçant parfois la composante « touristique » dans une position privilégiée par rapport aux éléments représentatifs pour « l'esprit du pèlerinage »<sup>105</sup>, les événements organisés par Axios présentent une image de la Roumanie comme espace idyllique<sup>106</sup>, où la sacralité n'est une caractéristique de la nature seulement, mais aussi du temps<sup>107</sup> et des gens<sup>108</sup>. Grâce à son

<sup>103</sup> Bogdan Grecu, « Mai vrem încă o zi ! Tabăra MOREOM, Neamț, 2009 », *Apostolia*, 2009, [http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol\\_298/%E2%80%9Emai-vrem-inca-o-zi%E2%80%9D-tabara-moreom-neam%C5%A3-2009.html](http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol_298/%E2%80%9Emai-vrem-inca-o-zi%E2%80%9D-tabara-moreom-neam%C5%A3-2009.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

<sup>104</sup> Constantin Popescu, « Jurnal de pelerin acasă », *Apostolia*, 2011, [http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol\\_700/jurnal-de-pelerin-acasa.html](http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol_700/jurnal-de-pelerin-acasa.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

<sup>105</sup> « Bien qu'on ait éliminé de la liste initiale un nombre significatif d'objectifs religieux, les occidentaux ont eu des réactions parfois négatives : on aurait du visiter moins pour pouvoir assister plus aux liturgies, prier plus, celui étant dans leur acception, l'esprit du pèlerinage », Constantin Popescu, loc. cit.

<sup>106</sup> Sur les monastères d'Olténie, le père Noël Tanazacq affirmait qu'« elles sont une image du Paradis », Noël Tanazacq, « Pelerinajul Axios. Oltenia, grădina Cerului », *Apostolia*, 2011, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_587/pelerinajul-axios-.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_587/pelerinajul-axios-.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013. « On voit semble-t-il réellement le passage de Creangă », Constantin Popescu, loc. cit.

<sup>107</sup> « On aurait pu rester à pieds les cinq heures que la liturgie avait durées, ça n'importait plus, le temps était disparu. On pouvait prier dans la continuation et dans la grâce d'un temps ancestral d'où rien ne pouvait pas nous faire sortir », Jean Lauxerois, « Paște la mănăstirea Lupșa sau Înțeleșul unui Pelerinaj », *Apostolia*, 2012, [http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol\\_780/pa%C5%9Fte-la-manastirea-lup%C5%9Fa-sau-in%C5%A3elesul-unui-pelerinaj-.html](http://m.apostolia.eu/ro/articol_780/pa%C5%9Fte-la-manastirea-lup%C5%9Fa-sau-in%C5%A3elesul-unui-pelerinaj-.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013. « En Bucovine, le temps trouve sa vraie valeur, la nature est pure, l'art culinaire est merveilleux », « Pelerinii Axios - 2009 », *Apostolia*, 2009, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_288/pelerinii-axios-2009.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_288/pelerinii-axios-2009.html), vérifié le 15 Janvier 2013.

<sup>108</sup> « Dans l'Église des dizaines de fidèles étaient sous les épitrachelion des pères hiéromoines en se préparant pour la confession avec la traditionnelle molebens. Des autres entraient, allumaient des bougies, priaient... Une atmosphère de Vendredi soir qui a émerveillé les Anglais du groupe, qui n'ont pas résisté à la tentation de faire une comparaison avec ce qui se passe le même jour en Angleterre, où toutes les saloons expérimentent une fréquence élevée de la part des habitants (...) », Constantin Popescu,

liaison historique avec l'orthodoxie, la Roumanie devient un espace sacré<sup>109</sup> et le contact avec ce pays devient similaire avec le contact que le pèlerin a lors de la rencontre avec les reliques des saints, ayant parfois un effet cathartique, contribuant à la construction de la communauté et de la communion entre des personnes appartenant aux confessions ou aux espaces différentes. De cette façon, assez intéressante est l'observation de Jean Lauxerois, pèlerin catholique qui propose différencier entre l'œcuménisme et « le sentiment jamais expérimenté de la communion de l'Église d'avant la séparation », « l'expérience de la vraie communauté ecclésiale » que la présence au monastère de Lupşa semble lui inspirer. Comme dans le cas des pèlerinages organisés en Europe Occidentale ayant comme destination les reliques ou les lieux où ont vécu des saints du premier millénaire, on peut observer aussi dans les exemples mentionnés ci-dessus des références à la vocation universelle de l'orthodoxie.

En ce qui concerne les convertis à l'orthodoxie intégrés dans les paroisses orthodoxes roumaines d'Europe Occidentale, les pèlerinages en Roumanie ont le rôle de renforcer leur foi, l'orthodoxie qu'ils ont connue dans une forme particulière dans leurs églises locales, dont ils veulent s'assurer d'être en accord avec l'ordre ancestral<sup>110</sup> dont le dépositaire semble être l'espace roumain. Le rôle que l'institution religieuse assume par l'organisation des pèlerinages est celui de garant autorisé d'assurer la médiation des contacts que les pèlerins ont avec « l'ordre ancestral », mais aussi celui de la conserver dans l'espace roumain et la reproduire dans ses églises locales en Occident. Contrôlant les formes et les pratiques anciennes de la foi et la manière d'y accéder, l'institution religieuse assure son capital de légitimité et sa pertinence en relation avec les nouveaux convertis.

## Conclusions

Pour la Métropole Orthodoxe Roumaine d'Europe Occidentale et Méridionale, la pratique du pèlerinage, illustrant une forte tendance d'institutionnalisation, est part de la réaction de l'acteur religieux face aux provocations de la modernité.

Construit et promu premièrement comme réponse aux besoins de survie des orthodoxes roumains émigrés, le pèlerinage est également une

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loc. cit. "J'étais près d'une paysanne vieille, qui par sa simple présence semblait me montrer comment prier », Jean Lauxerois, loc. cit.

<sup>109</sup> "Je n'avais jamais mis auparavant le pied sur le terre saint de Roumanie », Noël Tanazacq, loc. cit.

<sup>110</sup> « Pelerinii Axios - 2011 », *Apostolia*, 2011, [http://www.apostolia.eu/articol\\_588/pelerinii-axios-2011-%28i%29.html](http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_588/pelerinii-axios-2011-%28i%29.html), vérifié le 5 Octobre 2012.

réponse au besoin de survie de l'institution même, soit qu'on parle d'assumer le rôle de gestionnaire de la relation avec le sacré, soit qu'il s'agit d'offrir un contexte pour la socialisation et l'intégration.

Les pèlerinages organisés en Roumanie présentent la particularité de faire de l'institution religieuse le médiateur privilégié des différentes catégories de fidèles avec un espace d'expression et de pratique orthodoxe par excellence.

Maintenir le monopôle sur la pratique du pèlerinage est une des façons par lesquelles l'Église peut s'assurer de l'attachement des fidèles et implicitement de sa pertinence comme acteur social.

## Book reviews

***Bișnițari, descurcăreți, supraviețuitori* [Underground Economy in Communism: Traffickers, dealers, survivors], by Zoltan Rostas și Antonio Momoc (coord.), Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013.**

“We had to get through somehow, we had to survive. Were we supposed to live with only the paycheck, we would have starved to death...” (Iosifidis Fotache)  
“One had to use all kinds of trickery to survive” (Florica Ispas)

### *The Authors*

Zoltán Rostás and Antonio Momoc’s “Traffickers, dealers, survivors” is another tribute paid by the authors to oral history. It follows a long road of oral history publications under the direct coordination of sociologist and professor Rostás , such as: Monograph as utopia. Interviews with Henri H. Stahl (2000), An Oral History of the Bucharest Sociological School(2001), The faces of the town: Life stories in 20th century Bucharest(2002), Dialogues on Working Abroad (2006), , Young student looking for revolutionary (2011-2012).

Antonio Momoc is a young journalist and researcher whose preoccupations include communication, sociology and oral history. He has co-published, along with Zoltán Rostás, The small activists. Life stories (2007).

The present volume represents a collection of oral history interviews taken from “dealers, traffickers, survivors” of the communist regime, referring to individuals who replied the indigence and interdictions of the regime by developing survival strategies through the means of black market commerce. Oral history represents, as we shall argue, the best research method for documenting this side of the late communist regime in Romania.

Most of the interviewees are not professional researchers, but students in Journalism and Communication at the University of Bucharest. Under the direct coordination of Zoltan Rostas and Antonio Momoc, they investigated this successful socio-economic category of the communist regime - dealers - and a common phenomenon of the eighties, trafficking - along with their implications and profound effects on the Romanian post-communist economy and society.

### *The Storyline*

As Antonio Momoc calls it, the underground capitalism in communist Romania - a “capitalism before capitalism”- had its characters in ordinary, enterprising people, willing to take risks and trick communism. Not all the interviewees were or admitted to being dealers. Most of them were smart and resourceful, but all of them are survivors, proud of having outdone the universe of the ideological communist lie.



The seventeen interviews collected in the book represent seventeen types of responses to the harsh realities of the regime - material necessities, social and professional promotion through favouritism, the presence of the political police (the Securitate) in everyday life. Depending on each of the interviewees, these reactions varied from fear to struggle (for receiving a better job, dwelling), up to underground commercial strategies developed to supply the demand of a market that suffered severely from the lack of the necessities of life, the shortage of common trade goods, emptiness of the food, clothing and footwear stores. The stories depict an authentic portrait of the penury in the late communist years: the black market became the quest for coffee, foreign cigars, chocolate, candy, jeans, chewing gum, or quality nylons. Dealers often escaped the vigilance of officers whom they bribed with money or quality smuggled goods. Aside from being life stories, the interviews also represent thorough descriptions of how the 1980s Romanian society truly functioned: struggling between adaptation, transformation and social change.

#### *The Use of Oral History*

Our review proposes to argue that oral history is an essential method for documenting the phenomenon of trafficking in 1980s communist Romania and more precisely, the only one that can provide us with useful interpretations concerning the social significance and impact of black market purchase.

First of all, black market and dealing represent underground phenomena that are, generally, more difficult to trace. In the eighties, everyone knew about the underground market, many practiced it, yet the only valid evidence may be found in people's depositions. Archives are blind towards this unofficial side of economy since economical documentation within the communist archives is mainly dedicated to state industry and planned economy. Some traces of underground trafficking could be found in the Securitate archives, since it involved illegal activities, contacts with foreigners and sometimes trips abroad. However, dealing has not been researched so far inside the archives and furthermore, the existing testimonies of the small traffickers confirm bribing local officers in order to develop their small businesses.

Secondly, oral history grants access to witnesses directly involved in the phenomenon, who place their valuable depositions into the historian/sociologist's hands. Thus, we face a shared auctorial authority, between the historian/sociologist and the interviewee. Nevertheless, the control of the historical discourse remains in the hands of the researcher: it is he who selects the people to be interviewed, who contributes to the shaping of the testimony by asking the questions and reacting to the answers and, finally, by giving the oral testimony its final published shape and context (montage and transcription) (Portelli, 2003).

Thirdly, oral history offers the possibility of understanding and interpreting the events. The signification of the events in one's life represents in

itself a historical fact as well (as Alessandro Portelli states). Therefore, the oral history sources provide us not only with an informative dimension (given by the historical information delivered by the interviewee), but also an interpretative one (since the interviewee's subjective rendition filters the information and enriches it with symbol and signification). The consequence of this is that not only do we get to understand what trafficking was and how it functioned, but also what the impact on the lives of those involved (actors or mere beneficiaries) was.

Last, but not least, oral history connects individual and local history to "the great history of the world", placing itself at the interference of micro- and macrohistory.

#### *Considerations and Conclusions*

In a certain way, black market may seem a heroism of the last communist decades. In fact, it was a necessary retreat for survival. The resourceful traffickers, dealers and survivors are the ones who double-crossed the planned social economy, supplying the consumers with the goods they needed. After the fall of the communist regime, many of these small businessmen became "the main strings of a post-communist speculative capitalism" (Momoc), insomuch that the book portrays an interesting perspective on the social and economic mechanisms that contributed to Romania's current economic status.

The volume was received with wide appreciation, both academically and by the media. It soon sold out, and there were also proposals for an on-screen adaptation. The charm of the book, as well as other oral history anthologies published by professor Rostás, originates in the reader's ability to identify with the oral history subjects. It is this people's history, as opposed to the "great world history" that depicts best adaptation and social change.

One could not claim that the life stories contained in this volume show a different side of communism, for they depict communism in its fullness, in its daily materialization and its embodiment into common people's life – all in all, a grassroots history made possible only through the means of oral history.

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**Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, London, New York: Penguin Books, 2007**

The volume *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* is the result of a research which took place between 2003 and 2006. Three teams of researchers from The Memorial Society in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Perm recovered hundreds of family archives like letters, journals, memoirs, pictures and artifacts, which were hidden by the survivors of the Stalinist terror in secret drawers and under mattresses in private homes across Russia. Within each family extensive interviews were conducted with the older relatives, who were capable of explaining the context of these private documents and testimonials about private life during the Stalinist period, reflecting the interior world of those families and individuals.

Orlando Figes is Professor of History at Birkbeck College, University of London, being the author of seven books on Russian history like *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution*, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, *Crimea: The Last Crusade*, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917*, which have been translated in 27 languages. His most recent work is *Just Send Me Word: A True Story of Love and Survival in the Gulag*.

Many works tend to analyze the immediate events which were determined by the Stalinist terror, but this particular book is trying to look deeper concerning the influence of the regime on private and family life across generations. The author assumes from the beginning the direction which he is going to develop, that is why he establishes a few research questions: How did Soviet people live their private lives in the years of Stalin's rule? What did they really think and feel? What sort of private life was possible in the cramped communal apartments, where the vast majority of the urban population lived, where rooms were shared by a whole family and often more than one, and every conversation could be overheard in the next room? What did private life mean when the state touched almost every aspect of it through legislation, surveillance and ideological control?

This book focuses on the Stalinist period which is analyzed from two points of view: what it meant for the people who lived during those times and the effects those politics had on the mentalities of the next generations. When Stalin became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1929, immediately a regime of terror began. In the shadow of ideas like patriotism and the efforts of making Russia secure and competitive from a military and economical point of view, the new absolute leader imposed the First Five Year Plan, which included full control over industry and agriculture. But this wasn't the only reason to consider those years as ones of nightmare for the Russian people. Stalin began much earlier by eradication of every possible threat to his power. While he was the CPUS Secretary General, he labeled every potential rival as deviationist from the party's line and was ultimately responsible for their deaths. Along those,

there are the victims of collectivization, of the Great Famine, etc. The author talks about real national operations, deportations and executions of the soviet minorities which were labeled as possible spies. So many people disappeared between 1937 and 1938, especially from the party and communist elite that by the fall of 1938, almost every family had lost a relative. The author's exordium tries to create the proper atmosphere which allows the reader to understand the period that the witnesses present.

The increasing paranoia expanded to regular people's level of the Soviet Union. Families were forced to live with other persons in their own houses and it wasn't unusual for many families to share a small apartment. Stalin's aggressive campaign for protecting his power led to a nightmare of fear, arbitrary executions and the complete collapse of the social and family unit. Figes analyses the effects of the Stalinist terror on the regular soviet people among whom there were still a few who considered him as a protector. That is why brothers were spying on their sisters, husbands were spying on their wives, children on their parents, and they were happily reporting everything to the authorities.

According to Figes, the Russian language has two meanings for the word "whisperer": 1. someone who whispers out of the fear of being overheard (*shepshushchii*); 2. someone who informs or whispers behind people's backs to the authorities (*sheptun*). Being said that, the title reflects the societal impact of life under Stalin's rule. The distinction, writes Figes, has its origins in the idiom of the Stalinist years, when the entire soviet society was composed by whisperers of one kind or another. The majority whispered because they could have been heard by their neighbors or co-workers, who may have been informants. Others whispered to the authorities either because of the party pressure, their loyalty or maybe because they thought that what they're doing is the right path to choose. Even the family unit wasn't entirely secure. In these conditions, many children were educated or learned instinctively not to talk about their own family because "the walls have ears", and if something would get to the wrong ears, it could be a disaster for the family. In fact starting with the title, the author is developing a discourse which can be analyzed exactly from this perspective: was this silence an endurance mechanism for regular people, that helped them to resist, or was it the opposite, a symbol of submission, of accepting their faith? Even though Figes is not offering an answer in this direction, the examples the author presents are suggestive for each of these components. In fact, Figes's real merit is not by intervening with many explanations, but allowing his witnesses to exhibit their own experiences and life stories.

The paper presents in a diachronic way all these ramifications that extend from the years that followed the Russian Revolution, passing through collectivization, The Great Terror, The Second World War and even after Stalin's death in 1953. During this period, writes Figes, one's journal from 1937 proves

that people became so concerned with their own censoring in daily talk that they were in danger of losing the capacity of telling the truth. This fueled even more distrust because “no one knew what hides behind someone’s mask”. As a result, many have chosen diaries as a form of refuge in a world of truth.

Eventually these journals represented a treasure for historians. The richness of the material recovered by the team of researchers was doubled by interviews with people who lived during the Stalinist period. This book evokes 500 individual interviews, the average age of individuals being around 80. Regarding the methodology used, this book excels. Not only the quantity of the archival materials is impressive, but also the fact that Figes succeeds in explaining almost each one of them through all those interviews. In this way, the context of creating those sources can be explained and all the transformations that took place in people’s lives over time can be highlighted. Also, Figes put into practice a technique which is used by oral historians, intersected biographies. This was used for the first time by Oscar Lewis in 1943 and it meant that the historian had to interview each member of the family. This allows a cumulative vision of each individual and focuses on the different versions of the narrative, but also on how different generations perceive all the transformations that took place in their own family.

The book is structured according to political changes, international and internal context, which influenced not only the level of repressions, but also the individual attitudes. This work is organized chronologically in nine chapters, presenting the soviet experience in the terms of family history across two or even three generations: 1. Children of 1917 (1917-28); 2. The Great Break (1928-32); 3. The Pursuit of Happiness (1932-6); 4. The Great Fear (1937-8); 5. Remnants of Terror (1938-41); 6. „Wait For Me” (1941-5); 7. Ordinary Stalinists (1945-53); 8. Return (1953-6); 9. Memory (1956-2006).

The story starts with „the children of 1917”, which were exposed to the entire trust in the Bolshevich revolutionary ascetism, its antipathy towards the institution of bourgeois family. In order to destroy the old loyalties, family was the first line of attack. The children were enrolled in Komsomol and Pioneers, while the cult of Pavlik Morozov, a teenager who denounced his father, which led to his parent execution, represented the true loyalties that the young activists should embrace. The children of so-called counter revolutionaries were stigmatized. In order to survive, they often had to hide their own identity and origins.

Surprisingly, The Second World War was perceived by many as a positive change in their lives. The author says that this détente perceived by people was one almost palpable because individuals could act according to their own will from now on and they could speak to each other without having in mind the consequences of this fact. The central figure or “the tragic hero” of this book, as Figes likes to call him, is Konstantin Simonov. He was born in 1915 in a noble family, which was persecuted by the Soviet repression. Even with this kind of past, he didn’t hesitated to reinvent himself as a “proletarian writer”.

Nowadays he is not very well known, but during those times he was a major figure in the Soviet literary system, winning six Stalin Prizes, one Lenin Prize and one Hero of Socialist Work. In 1939 he married Yevgeniia Laskina, the youngest daughter of a Jewish family from Moscow. He abandoned his wife and child for an adventure with Valentina Serova, a famous actress to whom he dedicated one of the most famous poems during The Second World War, "Wait For Me". Ultimately Simonov became an important figure within the Writers Union, who were called upon by Stalin's ideologues to take part in the persecution of their fellow writers who were deemed too liberal, and to add their voice to the campaign against the Jews in arts and sciences. Unfortunately even his ex-wife and child were affected, but he was too involved so he could not do anything for them. Practically he was one of those who were guilty for their misery.

In the last part of this work, Figes allows the younger generations to rise above whispers. This multi-generational approach allows him to analyze the regime's legacies; the remains of it are present even today in the collective mind. Figes presents the impact of these numerous changes and levels of repression on communities and individuals, focusing on families who suffered and prospered during the Stalinist period. We have the possibility to understand how private life was during Stalinist years from regular people, from kulaks, from those with tsarist origins and even from the soviet society's elites who had power and an important social status.

In conclusion, Orlando Figes succeeds with this work on realizing a complex radiography of the soviet society starting with the idea that the year 1917 meant not only a turning point regarding political changes, but also regarding people's lifestyle. Whispers are in this particular case a way of survival. It is an important difference between those who are wary because of the possible problems and those who are trying to transform information into leverage in order to become part of the soviet elite. This new system of values almost without example in modern societies had prolonged effects which enrolled into people's profound mentalities. Based on the strength of the methodology that was used and on the clear and humanized language, Figes recreates a sober atmosphere, at a very detailed level of the un-pleasures felt by the people, succeeding on raising people's voices above whispers.

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**John Street, *Music and Politics*, Policy Press, Cambridge, 2012, 198 p.**

Right from the title of the book the author points the way in which he's going with the two main subjects: music and politics. In the nine chapters of the book he is always trying to give the reader a view of musical politics or political music or music and politics. All three views argued in this volume.

In he's book, John Street is trying to find and define a bridge between music and politics. He finds it difficult to point out the right connections, but in his argument base on case studies and historical events make things easier to understand for the potential readers.

Right from the Introduction he points out three examples of events in which music and politics collide: the problem with music as a tool for means of war and genocide in Rwanda, as religious suppression, through politics, by so called religious and social standards in Taliban controlled Afghanistan and the right to music as a human need which was the point of legislature in the House of Lords in Great Britain's Parliament. Three cases which, I believe, have stood at the root of John's Street argument in this book: music as a political tool, as a symbol of freedom of expression, which can influence politics, and as a basic human need (humans are hardwired on music).

In the first chapter we take a look at censorship, music as freedom or some kind of power that can take hold on people and turn them against a system (any system: political, religious, social or cultural). In the second chapter John Street argues the facades of propaganda, music as a political tool, how music becomes an instrument of the state, of political power. The third chapter is an argument of avoiding confusion between political representation and political involvement in music. It points out the limits that musicians take to show in perspective ones political views and how musical politics - commercial politics, copy right legislation, etc. - have an impact on limiting political discourse.

The fourth and fifth chapters take the reader in a comparative perspective of two politically motivated musical movements: Live8 and Rock Against Racism(R.A.R), the difference between this two movements and their social impact. The sixth chapter deals with the cultural value of music by comparing the release of an anthology of American folk music and the political influence that stood at the root of the folk songs selected. And it takes a look in the multiple meanings of Woodstock for those that have been there in 1969.

The seventh chapter takes a look on music as a product, what music is for the general consumer and how musical charts can influence the possible buyer/listener. The eight chapter is an introduction to music history, while the ninth chapter it's a retrospective of the other eight chapters.

In the Conclusions of the book, John Street explains himself why he choose music and politics for a book subject. He points out the frustration of the

lack of research of political studies in music and the void in which political studies researches never took a look.

'Music and politics' is a good start for an introduction in research on the connections that music and politics have. I believe John Street, in some sense, has reached his goal. For someone interested in what politics means for music or what music means for politics, this book is a good introduction. The author gives us the inside of the many ways that music and politics intertwine. I think it's a good book to understand music as a political discourse by itself and as a political tool. How politics can decide what music should be and what music can become as a second track to politics.

From my point of view, I did not find gaps in what the author is trying to argue. It is a good example of analysis of how two, apparently, different concepts can depend on each other and influence one another (a lot!). This book does argue for a good correlation of the many ways music and politics blend together and it can be a starting point for political scientists, historians or social studies.

This said, we could end the review with what John Street hoped for achieving: 'how we can and should think of music as politics, and politics as music'.

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**Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality* [Prețul inegalității], trad. în limba română: Smaranda Nistor, București, Ed. Publica, 2012.**

If we look back in history it seems that the problem of inequality has never been an issue that needed to be discussed openly by the large masses. This discussion was exclusively reserved for intellectuals. Nowadays the situation has changed drastically, and the topic of inequality became a hot issue and has spread throughout the Globe. It is a sensitive problem of our contemporary world and the discussions that emerged over the last years in every society are similar to the impact had on the academic debate of Karl Marx's position on inequality. Following the Arab spring, we witnessed a new wave of discontent that aroused the youth. The topic of inequality became an issue of awareness for social activism in the developed countries. The recent economic crisis had an important role in the waves of protest that emerged in the last 2-3 years.

This brings us closer to our subject, which is "The Price of Inequality" a brilliant book signed by Nobel Prize winner Joseph E. Stiglitz in June 2012. It is safe to call it *The Handbook of new wave social activism*. It is as much true to say



that it is designed for developed countries, and not for other underdeveloped parts of the World.

The book is an easily read and this is the strong point of the book. Dedicated to the crowds it just has to be like this. But this is its weakest point also. A person with limited knowledge of economics will not fully understand it and will probably see it as a manifesto to end inequality but not knowing how to do it. On the other hand a reader with basic knowledge of economics and politics will find that some assertions are misleading or not convincing. The book is filled with a typical left wing discourse, so we are constantly told that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. This could easily be the motto of this book. This could appear to be a striking finding, if we consider that Stiglitz is known to be an advocate for capitalism. But for those who think that he has changed his mind we must disappoint them, because the authors blames that greed, corruption and lobby are to blame for how the system works, or malfunctions.

The story of the book started back in May 2011 when the author published an article in *Vanity Fair*, entitled "Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%". This one could be considered to be the birth certificate of the *We are the 99 percent* social movement, which proved to have had a major impact on social activism. However, the movement's anti-corporate vision and the desire to change the actual world order, it is not the same as the author's. While Stiglitz inspired thousands of young people to take to the streets, they did it having different views. This book is crucial for understanding inequality and everybody who is interested in the subject should have read it or should consider reading it.

In general, leftist or anarchist activists suggest that inequality and other economical downturns of our society are caused exclusively by capitalism's faulty nature. Joseph Stiglitz exhibits that the cause of inequality is the result of deregulated markets combined with an immovable political system when faced with new realities that unable or it lacks the will to make changes.

Stiglitz's book is a description of poverty in a developed country and tells us how The United State of America has reached the peak of inequality, by American standards. The author blames the markets for their failure to promote equity (social equity) but he always blames the bad CEO's that are behind the markets and they are the reason for the peaking inequality. So we can only wonder who is to blame: the men behind the markets that take all the bad decisions while taking huge bonuses, or the markets themselves? It appears to us that, according to Stiglitz, the markets and the CEO's are one and the same thing. But is it the same? One can only wonder! Even the author tells us later in the book, that there are other factors to blame. So his view is that a big chunk of inequality is caused by the Government's policies. As we look at this two separated arguments we must point out that Stiglitz tends to change his mind about his previous affirmations from the book. In another train of thoughts, this book seems to discuss more about injustice than inequality, but in all fairness we

must admit that injustice has a major role in the making of inequality. Stiglitz's main effort, which is praiseworthy, is that he plays the role of a vigilante that is set to expose the wrongdoings of all those that are to blame for the current economic crisis and the rise of inequality in the USA. Everything from the bad CEO's, and Stiglitz is a bit too much obsessed with them, to the bad policies (mainly republican) is taken under keen observation, and this is the main trump of the book.

The author puts social cohesion on the trust in economy wellbeing, saying that without trust (equality) the society will not be able to function. Afterwards, he compares the future of an unequal USA with post-communist Russia. In his words: "Russia became the *Wild East*, more lawless than America's Wild West before it was tamed" because there was no social trust after the fall of the communist regime. But the author fails here to convince us about the role of economic trust for social cohesion, and we can only mention that the trust in economy in the socialist countries during the communist regimes was high and the problems were caused by other factors like corruption or the unprecedented systemic change, which are put aside by Stiglitz. Other allegations like this one can be found throughout the book. Their presence does not diminish the overall value of the book but for some readers they can be disturbing. But these inconclusive arguments will not bother the target audience. The author appears to use a tactic of scaring activists into action by painting in black and white rather than using more appropriate faded colors.

*The price of inequality* has more strong points than weak ones. First, it knocks down the myth of the American dream. Stiglitz argues that instead of more opportunities, the ordinary American has just more inequality. Secondly, the author, after having identified the problem of inequality, comes up with some simple but not easy to implement solutions. We can only point out that among them we can find: regulating the banking system, ban on abusive lending and holding banks accountable for fraudulently practices.

Some people have argued in the past few years that capitalism have failed us once more and it is unable to be reformed. The streets are filled with protesters that call for an end of capitalism. But Stiglitz offers a good answer for the problems, and this book should be of prime interest for everybody that started to blame an economical system not knowing that the problem comes from more humanly feelings like greed or corruption. So there is no need for something new but a simple fix for the old stuff.

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