

Florian Banu¹ – Liviu Tăranu²**Securitatea in Romania (1948-1989) – an Evaluation****Abstract**

According to Ernest Volkman, a reputed investigator of the secret service world, the attempt by historians to understand the role of these institutions and the information they have acquired in the course of world events "resembles much the opening of a path through an impassable, dark, mysterious, paradox, contradictory facts, absent or "purified" records, convenient, secret memories, "plausible denial" and, occasionally, open lies, without mentioning misinformation and misleading"³.

In the case of studying an institution which, in the service of the communist regime, combines specific activities with secret services everywhere with the activities characteristic of political police, a number of other impediments must be added to the difficulties summarized by the author.

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³ VOLKMAN, Ernest (1998): Spionaj. București. Editura Rao. pp. 11-12.

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Introduction

Among these, we recall: the destruction of compromising archive documents during and immediately after the collapse of the communist regime, the recovery and reintegration of many officers and collaborators of the old structures in the institutions specific to the transition to a democratic regime, the political connotations attributable to certain actions or certain actors of past events not far removed, as well as the difficulty of a cold detached analysis of recent aspects of history. Also, the investigator's conclusions will inevitably be regarded with suspicion, trying to find out the "political orientation" and the circle of interest to which he is an exponent.

Despite these difficulties, the authors of the present study share the optimistic opinion expressed by Marius Oprea in 2008, an assiduous researcher of the history of the Securitate, who believes that "undoubtedly heated talks and judgments will leave the scientific approach as soon as possible when the generation born around 1989 will reach maturity"⁴.

As such, by this scientific approach, we propose, more than a quarter of a century after the collapse of the communist regime in Romania, an evaluation study of one of the fundamental institutions of this regime: Securitatea.

⁴ OPREA, Marius (2008): Bastionul cruzimii. O istorie a Securității (1948-1964). Iași, Editura Polirom. p. 17.

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The roots: the Marxist and Leninist theory

The history of the Securitate in Romania is closely connected to the Romanian Communist Party's evolution, the unique leading force of the society for more than four decades. Therefore, neither the origin, nor the functioning nor the dissolution of the Securitate could be analyzed and understood without taking into account the ideological fundamentals of the regime that it had served and protected.

The Romanian communist leaders' perspective about state and its role originated in the theory elaborated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels with regard to the state of "the proletarian dictatorship". According to these German theorists, the state, as a result of the society divided into antagonistic classes, functions as an instrument to dominate or impose the dictatorship of the dominant class *under economic terms (sub rapport economic)* and helps this class to become dominant *through political terms (sub rapport politic)*, suppressing in the meantime the opposition of the oppressed classes. The elimination of the capitalism implied a new form of state: the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletarians.

"The period between the capitalist society and the communist is the period of revolutionary transformation of the former into the latter. The counterpart of this period is a period of political transition whose state cannot be other than *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*"⁵.

Of course, R.C.P., a Marxist-Leninist party, did not ignore the theoretical contributions of V. I. Lenin regarding the state and the

⁵ MARKS, Karl (1969): Critica programului de la Gotha. București. Editura Politică. p. 28.

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proletarian dictatorship. According to him, “who has not understood that in order to achieve the victory any revolutionary class has to exert its dictatorship, he has not understood a thing from the history of revolutions or he want to know nothing about this”⁶.

Besides, Lenin explained very precisely what is meant by dictatorship: “The scientific notion of the dictatorship means nothing but a power which cannot be restricted by anything, either by law, which cannot be abashed by any norm that relies directly on violence. The notion of <<dictatorship>> means *nothing but this*”⁷.

Stalin as well considered that the state „ ... is machinery within hands of the dominant class used to repress the resistance of its class enemies. In this regard, the proletarian dictatorship does not distinguish itself fundamentally by the dictatorship of any other class, because the proletarian state is machinery used for the repression of the bourgeoisie. But there is an important distinction which implies that all class states that have existed until now represented the dictatorship of the exploiting minority over the exploited majority, while the proletarian dictatorship is the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority”⁸.

Consequently, according to the “founding fathers”, the state by means of which the goals of the communist doctrine had to be

⁶ V. I. Lenin, Cu privire la istoria problemei dictaturii, apud Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Despre comunismul științific* București, Editura Politică, 1964, p. 155.

⁷ V. I. Lenin, Victoria cadeților și sarcinile partidului muncitoresc, 28 martie 1906, în V.I. Lenin, *Opere complete*, ediția a doua, vol. 12, București, Editura Politică, 1962, pp. 310-311.

⁸ I. V. Stalin, *Opere*, vol. 6, București, Editura Partidului Muncitoresc Român, 1949, p. 125.

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achieved, such as the overthrow of the capitalist order⁹ and the overall reconstruction on the main bases radically different of the socialist society, could only be a dictatorship, “the state of proletarian revolutionary dictatorship”, according to Marx’ writings.

Therefore, it can be assessed that for the first time, the communist ideology turned the use of violence for the repression of the political enemies and construction of a new society, not only into a legal act but into a fundamental principle of the new state¹⁰.

The implementation of the communist ideology in Romania

The ideological subordination of the communist leaders in Romania to the soviet pattern of interpretation and application of the Marxist-Leninist theory in general, and the state’s role of the proletarian dictatorship in particular¹¹, reached its climax starting

⁹ Especially after the World War Two, Stalin’s theories were applied with consistency to all domains, most of which the social justice being shaped according with these theories:” The Stalinist teaching regarding the helping role of the superstructure and its impossibility to hold positions of equal attitude toward the opposing classes, arms the Soviet juridical science in order to reveal the class core substance regarding different types of state and law. The core substance of state and law is always determined by the class whose dictatorship it represents, by the center they serve, by the classes against which they are used.” – N. G. Alecsandrov, *Câteva problem de teorie a statului și dreptului în lumina învățaturii staliniste despre bază și suprastructură*, în “Analele Româno-Sovietice. Seria Drept”, an VI, seria a III-a, nr. 4, aprilie-iunie 1952, p. 9.

¹⁰ MILLER, David (2000) (cord.): *Enciclopedia Blackwell a gândirii politice*. București. Editura Humanitas. pp. 782 -783.

¹¹ Besides, the universal validity of the formulated theories was assessed by Lenin himself: “the core substance of Marx’ teaching about state has been assimilated only by those who have understood that the dictatorship of **an only**

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with 1948 along with the elimination of all other democratic forces and the establishment of the dictatorial regime, was laid on the working class unique party's formula – The Romanian Workers' Party (Partidul Muncitoresc Român).

But it has to be noticed that the formula adopted to define the new type of state within political condition of that time was not that of "proletarian dictatorship" but that of "people's democracy" – a simple linguistic artifice meant to save some appearances. Besides, the Romanian communist leaders did not hesitate to lay the two expressions on equal positions. In this regard, in November 1949 with the occasion of celebration of the Bolshevik revolution, Gheorghiu-Dej declared: "The proletarian dictatorship's experience in The U.S.S.R. represents a thesaurus of precepts for all countries where the proletarians have conquered the state power. The people's democracy which exerts the proletarian dictatorship's functions is itself a form of proletarian dictatorship, but the higher form of the proletarian dictatorship is the soviet form"¹².

one class is necessary not only for any society generally divided into classes, not only for the proletarians who stroke down the bourgeoisies, but also for the entire historical period that separates capitalism by the <<society without classes>>, by communism. The types of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but their core substance is the same: all these states are, one way or another, but finally obligatory, **the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie**. It is impossible for the transition from capitalism to communism not to give an enormous diversity of political forms, but their core substance would inevitably be the same: **proletarian dictatorship**." – V. I. Lenin, Statul și revoluția. Învățăturile Marxismului despre stat și sarcinile proletariatului în revoluție, in V. I. Lenin, Opere, vol. 25, iunie – septembrie 1917, București, 1956, p. 409.

¹² GHEORGHIU-DEJ Gheorghe (1953): Articole și cuvântări, ed. a III-a, București. Editura pentru Literatură Politică. p. 390.

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Assuming the soviet pattern to himself Dej then explained how Romanian communists had to understand the core substance of the proletarian dictatorship state:

“The soviet order is the largest democracy for working class and for all the working people. But it provides in the meantime the smashing of the exploiting class’ attempts to retake the power, to reestablish the oppression and capitalist exploitation over the large masses of those who work it provides the elimination of exploiting classes. (...) This is the proletarian dictatorship.

People’s democracy during the transition from capitalism to socialism has to assure the working people against any attempts to restore the capitalist exploitation in our country therefore it is a form of proletarian dictatorship.

People’s democracy has the task to smash all outside and inside enemy’s attempts to restore the country to the old capitalist path (our emphasis). It has also the task to guarantee transition from capitalism to socialism. Thus, it provides functions achievement which great Lenin assigned to proletarian dictatorship”¹³.

The identification of “People’s democracy” with “the proletarian dictatorship” was unanimously shared by the R.C.P.’s leaders. Thus, Teohari Georgescu, the frightening interior minister of the regime, in the exposure of reasons to the draft of the law on people’s councils, emphasized: “The regime of people’s democracy is a type of proletarian dictatorship. It successfully accomplishes proletarian dictatorship’s functions, i.e., the functions of eliminating economic positions of the exploiting classes, the

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 243-245.

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functions of suppression the attempts to restore the old order, the functions of engaging masses of working people in the project the construction of socialism under proletarian leadership”¹⁴.

Therefore, the Marxist-Leninist ideology armed the new leading elite in Bucharest with a well-articulated system of theories which accounted for the harshest repression against wide social categories generically called the “exploiting classes”. The institution which Romanian Communist Party entrusted with the very responsible task to “smash all the attempts of the enemy from the inside and outside” was the Securitate.

Naturally, the pattern adopted in August 1948 for the intelligence services of the regime was the soviet one. It could not be different as long as the ideological goals were similar, and the logistical support, specialized counseling, as well as reliable staff, came from the Soviet Union. Besides, the activity of the similar institutions from East had demonstrated to be a successful providing the triumph of the Bolshevik Party in extremely difficult conditions and the maintaining in the obedience a wide population dissipated on a wide territory.

Furthermore, the intelligence penetration in the West during and immediately after the World War Two was a major one. It was obvious that Romanians novices had a lot to learn from the soviet masters!

As truly as that is the fact that the Soviet Union, untrusting the loyalty and ability of the leaders in Bucharest, pursued to assure the control over the intelligence system by appointing in main

¹⁴ “România liberă”, 13 ianuarie 1949

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positions some persons who had been suspected of affiliation to the Soviet Secret Services and also by founding its own agency by the counselors delegated to support the first stages of the Romanian Securitate.

Therefore, from uniforms and weapons to the interception systems of the conversations and professional brochures, everything related to the Securitate's activity during its first decay of existence, was marked by the Soviet stamp. However, it has to be noted that Lenin's desideratum that proletarians, after taking over the political power, "completely destroy the old state machinery, replacing it with a new one that consisted of armed workers' organization", was amended to some extent.

Apart from maintaining the inherited intelligence-repressive structures by the new political leadership, between 1945 and 1948 the continuity element had been represented, first of all, by those common characteristics of the political police from everywhere and anytime: the obedience to the ruling political force, the contempt towards the law and the violation of human fundamental rights and liberties. In this equation it should not be overlooked the use of some techniques established by the field data collection, the interrogation techniques or methods to put on operative games.

The big difference between the old structures and the newly established Securitate consisted of abandonment of any legal limitations and providing, at least in the first decade of activity, quasi-total impunities of the Securitate's cadres for abuses committed against "people's enemies".

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How to define the Securitate?

In this context the problem of definition the character of this institution is an imperative. Was it a political police¹⁵, a secret service¹⁶, a national security police, an intelligence service or a little bit of all these?

The question may seem useless, but all these denominations may be founded in the problem's historiography. In order to get a pertinent answer, it should be discerned the elements of novelty by

¹⁵Although in the historiography a consensus regarding the defining features of the political police has not been reached yet (see Alain Dwerpe's considerations on secret services institutionalization in Alain Dwerpe, *Spionul. Antropologia secretului de stat contemporan*, translation from French by Dan C. Mihăilescu, București, Editura Nemira, 1998, p. 125-160), from our point of view, political police mean any structure organized by the state power, capable to obtain, analyze and synthesize political and personal information about political opponents of the ruling party / parties or of the state leader in order to take countermeasures.

¹⁶ We use the term „secret service” with the meaning of an entirely hidden structure, unknown for the public and whose existence has been constantly denied by the state authorities. In this regard, an example may be the National Bureau for Aerial Reconnaissance – Biroul Național pentru Recunoaștere Aeriană (N.R.O.), - founded by the president Eisenhower on August 25, 1960. According to Christopher Andrew, a famous British specialist in the history of the secret services, “throughout a generation, N.R.O. had been considered the most secret spy agency in America. Mass media hadn't known about its existence until 1973 and its activity hadn't been officially acknowledged until September 1992” - Christopher Andrew, *CIA și Casa Albă. Serviciul secret și Președinția americană de la George Washington la George Bush*, Translation from English by Daniela Mișcov, București, Editura Bic All, 1998, p. 227. Another example is that of Israeli secret service „Lakam”, an acronym for *Lisbka le-Kishrei Mada* – The Bureau of Scientific Affairs Connections, whose existence „hadn't been revealed for more than three decades” - Dan Raviv, Yossi Melman, *Spioni împotriva Armagedonului. Războaiele secrete ale Israelului*, translation from English by Mihai- Dan Pavelescu, București, Meteor Publishing, 2013, p. 50.

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those of continuity between the Securitate's activities and those of the structures that had preceded it, not only in the sphere of methods and means used, but especially in the sphere of pursued goals.

As we have already revealed, the Securitate's means and methods of action, objectively analyzed, even if they were reprovable in most of the cases, did not fundamentally differ by those used by the similar services from other countries. Thus, without speaking of the *ensorship of correspondence, stakeout, wiretapping or the use of the informers*, practices that had already been used for a long time by the Romanian or other specialized services, not even the most terrible methods and actions of the Securitate were not without a counterpart in other contemporary institutions' practices, which do not even have the excuse to have been functioning in a totalitarian state.

Beyond any institutional transformations it still remains the fact that any institution, as a last resort, consists of people. The forms of institutional aggregation, the methods and means used in activity are all moving to a second plan, people having the main role in activity.¹⁷

Or, from our point of view, the main deficiency of the Securitate was the quality of people that it used. Even in the service of the

¹⁷ Referring to the imprisonment harshness in different prisons, a former political prisoner told in 1965: "the terror regime was not the same in all prisons, they moved us in many prisons. The [official] regime was the same, but was not applied with the same brutality, it depended on the camp leadership, if the staff, and especially the headmaster was humane, the sense of humanity was not entirely faded in him, you could feel a sort of relief." – A.C.N.S.A.S., fond Informativ, dosar nr. 3.560, vol. 2, f. 124.

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communist party and respecting the repressive legislation drafted by this, the Securitate would have caused much less harm, much less victims, if it had hired other people.

The criteria imposed by the ideology in the process of selection and formation of the cadres reflected themselves in a negative way in the institution's activity during its functioning. The precarious general knowledge, the lack of specialized knowledge and a minimum of notions of law, all combined with the organic hate nurtured by many of the employees toward those generally assigned "people's enemies", led to the perpetration of some horrible abuses such as crimes, tortures, ruination of some destinies, and to lamentable professional failures in the sphere of gathering information.

New winds brought some changes

The institution underwent transformations, especially after 1967; even if they led to an increase in the general knowledge level and professional skills, did not succeed to eliminate initial deficiencies that had been affecting the Securitate's officers. Despite of recruiting some officers from university graduates, raising the standard for admission to the officer's school and for elimination from the institution of too compromised officers on account of abuses committed, the flaws that came out in the first decade of activity could not be eliminated, many of the distinguished officers in the "obsessively decade", when they were at their early career, advanced in time in higher positions and had been maintained there until '80. Therefore, the old flaws were subtly "transferred" to

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the young people who had recently joined the system, not to mention that the “veterans” occasionally felt the need to remember their “chekist” youth¹⁸.

The outcome was the preservation of a quite low level of professionalism, mainly in internal activities, the adjustment to the so-called “socialist legality” (and this led to a substantial decrease of abuses!) and the simulation of commitment and dedication to the system and its representatives. The advancement of some party activists to the command functions, especially after the desertion of General OP. CIT. Pacea, did nothing but strengthen even more the security structures and rapidly led to the abandonment of the modernization attempt recorded between 1967 and 1973.

On the other hand, it had to be noticed that during the ‘70s-‘80s, when the regime was strengthened and accepted, more or less consented by most of the people, the challenges that the security apparatus had to cope with were different to a great extent if compared to those from the first period of the regime.

The capture of the paratroopers sent across the “Iron Curtain” and the bloody elimination of the anticommunist resistance’s armed groups were replaced by the ideological subversion, with its entire arsenal, which was peaceful but equally deadly for the communist

¹⁸ An eloquent example was proudly evoked by General Nicolae Pleșiță in 2000s, the Paul Goma mistreatment in March 1977, during the detention to the Securitate: „I caught him at the criminal investigations, I grabbed his beard and I punched him in the jaw that he remained neck twisted. <<Your mother’s God, asshole, you are concerning about Havel while your country is dying by Tartars?!>>” – Ochii si urechile poporului. Convorbiri cu generalul Nicolae Pleșiță. Dialoguri consemnate de Viorel Patrichi in perioada aprilie 1999 - ianuarie 2001. București. Editura Lumea. 2001. p. 145.

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regime. The attacks were no more carried out with grenades and semiautomatic guns, but with books, music and films. The wall of ideological censorship was falling dawn in front of telecommunications satellites, video tape and personal computers! The primitive sabotage, such as setting on fire the threshing areas or damaging the threshers, had already been replaced by the technical and economic spying, shell companies, onerous contracts, rigged auctions, fictitious invoices! The terrorists did not ignite the Bickford fuses any more, but pressed the button of a remote control panel or sent explosive envelopes by mail!

All of these claimed a radical change of the security paradigm of the regime and assumed a wide effort of re-conceptualization the position and role of the Securitate within the state edifice. Or, exactly this effort proved that the new requirements were much higher than the intellectual capabilities and political influence of personages called to lead this institution in its final period.

In the captivity of obedience

Harshly maintained in a state of total obedience toward political factor, the Securitate apparatus was led to organic inability to evolve towards professionalization and transformation into a genuine intelligence service¹⁹. Being designed as the party's

¹⁹ The most eloquent example in this case is the indignant rejection by Party leadership of the iterative requests coming from the Securitate regarding the preservation of the informative human sources' conspiracy, an elementary rule for any intelligence service of anytime and anywhere! The intervention of Gh. Gheorgiu-Dej during the meeting of the Political bureau on June 1st 1954 is also eloquent: "I would propose to be provided a point in this

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“sword and shield” by the regime’s leaders, the Securitate had to align its activity to certain recognizable tendencies during its entire existence. Thus, the great “problem-cases” from the political police specific section remained the same for four decades: “The former bourgeois political parties” (“Fostele partide politice burgheze”), “The Legionary Movement” („Mișcarea Legionară”), “Cults-Sects” (“Culte — Secte”), “Studious Youth” („Tineret studios”), “Justice” („Justiția”), “Military Counterintelligence” („Contrainformații militare”), “Press-Printings” („Presă - Tipărituri”), “Nationalism-Irredentism” („Naționalism - iredentism”), “Hostile Emigration” („Emigrație dușmănoasă”).

From this point it became clear at a great extent, the impossibility of the Securitate to fulfill the tasks assigned by the party. The ambition “to know everything”, to not let “uncovered” any section of social life, i.e. the ambition specific to any totalitarian regime, led to the dispersal of forces and blur of the real threats, lost among anodyne facts, deprived of any political meaning. Besides, the documents from the ‘80s denote with no doubt the fact that the Securitate officers were entirely overwhelmed: the number of

decision/resolution/decreed where it is mandatory/obligatory for the leaders of the regional offices/directions/departments of the ministry also to report on the professional issues to the prime/first secretaries of party regional committees, but not on the competent ones, also to know the agency, its activity, there must be no secret for the prime secretaries of the party regional committees. (...) He has the right to/is entitled to know in a decoded way the agency in order to know the source of information and to be completely informed of the activities of M.A.I. organs. (...)” On the same occasion, Dumitru Coliu synthesized the activists’ perspective in the following words: “The party municipal/town secretaries are ten times more superior (sic!) compared to the respective M.A.I. organs.” - apud Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității, Partidul și Securitatea. Istoria unei idile eșuate (1948-1989), editori: Flonan Banu, Luminița Banu, Iași, Casa Editorială „Demiurg”, 2013, p. 242.

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foreign citizens who were coming to Romania (as tourists, with business purposes or just to visit their relatives) was increasing year by year, the amount of internal and external correspondence blew up, the number of Romanians who were leaving abroad (for work, to visit relatives, to study or as tourists) was increasing!

Furthermore, specific domains were proved to be simply incomprehensible. For example, the Securitate ambition to dispose of a quality intelligence network in each education unit (from kindergarten to university) proved to be downright chimeric, considering that the educational system was including no less than 5.592.344 young people in 1989, representing 24,6% of the population of the country. Their number was completed by the number of the masters, teachers, pedagogues, who had also to be supervised.

The expansion up to absurdity of the Securitate operative base could only lead to a general antipathy from the population, which felt itself increasingly supervised, combined with an informational collapse of the institution, unable to manage the multitude of the “security risks” anymore, as the more numerous information sent to specialized organs had no practical consequence.

Besides, during the last years of the regime, it has to be noticed an increasingly obvious commitment of the Securitate to the line of so-called “hostile comments”, inscriptions and letters with a “hostile content”. This realm of activity of the Securitate illustrated, perhaps in the best way possible, the pattern of historical evolution revealed by Giambattista Vico through the formula *corsi e ricorsi*, and also the organic inability of the communist regime to get rid of its native sin.

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Ceausescu's role

Therefore, during the C.C. plenary session of the R.C.P. from June 26-27, 1967, having the desire to subordinate the Securitate to himself and to eliminate his rival, Alexandru Drăghici, Nicolae Ceausescu did not hesitate to declare: "Every minute you surely find one who says that cheese is not good, others say they are not satisfied with Mizil or Ceaușescu said, but this is not hostile activity that has to be debated and make us to take actions against people. (...) Some criticize us. Of course they criticize us, comrades! But in the end, is it wrong that they criticize that we take a wrong action in one or another field of activity? From this point on, can we really draw new conclusions regarding that among intellectuals there might be found people who support the reaction? But what do these critiques mean? They refer to some deficiencies that we criticize even more than they do, because we got more possibilities, we are more prepared to handle elements and because we desire to make things right. I consider that this way to think about problems, that any critique of any action, any manifestation that the cheese is not enough for him, the wage is not enough for him, we immediately consider a hostile action. I have considered, comrades, that we exceeded this stage long time ago! If we continue to deal with gathering any minor trifle, that one said he found no onions at the market, and instead of criticize Banc²⁰ and Giosan²¹ because they didn't manage to produce

²⁰ **Banc Iosif**, n. 3 mart. 1921, com. Aluniș, jud. Mureș, membru supleant al C.C. al P.M.R. (28 dec. 1955-25 iun. 1960); membru al C.C. al P.M.R./P.C.R. (25 iun. 1960-24 nov. 1989); at that date he was the **vicepresident of the Council of Ministers (21 aug. 1965-24 apr. 1972)**; - C.N.S.A.S., Membrii C.C. al P.C.R. 1945-1989. Dicționar, Florica Dobre (coord.), Liviu Marius Bejenaru, Clara Cosmineanu-Mareș, Monica Grigore, Alina Ilinca, Oana Ionel, Nicoleta

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onion, we criticize that one because he dared to complain that there is no onion or tomatoes, shoes or good socks, and so on, we do not act properly. I criticized too the comrades from the consumer industry and trade that one cannot find any good socks in Romania”²².

After only ten years, the discussions of the population were carefully observed again and the expression of complaints regarding food shortages, the lack of fuels, electricity and heat or any other deficiencies or aberrant political actions, especially if they reached the international media, turned the ordinary citizen, exasperated by the endless sacrifices he was required, into a “subject” for the Securitate, with his whole batch of discontents. Equally significant is the reinsertion on the agenda of the Securitate of some “sins” attributed to the ‘50s, such as the attendance of the foreign libraries in Bucharest²³.

This situation shows once more the truth of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s words at the plenary meeting in June 1967: “It seems to me that for the entire party it has been obviously for a long time that the

Ionescu-Gură, Elisabeta Neagoe-Pleșa, Liviu Pleșa, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2004, pp. 82-83.

²¹ **Giosan Nicolae**, n. 30 dec. 1921, sat Drâmbar, com. Ciugud, jud. Alba; d. 31 iul. 1990, Penitenciarul Jilava; Membru supleant al C.C. al P.M.R. (28 dec. 1955-17 iun. 1960); membru al C.C. al P.M.R./P.C.R. (17 iun. 1960-22 dec. 1989); membru supleant al Comitetului Politic Executiv al C.C. al P.C.R. (28 nov. 1974-22 dec. 1989). At that time, he was **the President (27 iul. 1965-13 nov. 1969) of the Higher Council of Agriculture (Consiliului Superior al Agriculturii)** - Membrii C.C..., pp. 298-299.

²² BERINDEI, Apud Mihnea – DOBRINCU, Dorin – GOȘU, Armand (2012): *Istoria comunismului din România. vol. II. Documente Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965-1971)*, Iași. Editura Polirom. p. 321 și p. 324.

²³ A.C.N.S.A.S., fond Documentar, dosar nr. 8.833, vol. 12, ff. 318-320.

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Securitate is an instrument of the party and state, assigned to accomplish the orders of the party and government in the fight with the enemies of working people, of the constructors of socialism. This has been the role of the Securitate since its foundation, it is still and will be in the future!”²⁴.

Exactly this perspective was fully carried into effect during the ‘80s when the Securitate was given missions by the Party, missions that normally would have represented at least most minor activities for a professional intelligence service serving national security.

In this regard, it could be mentioned the so-called ”Operation Exchange Rate” carried out primarily through U.M. 0107 I.C.E. „Dunărea” and also through other units within C.I.E. and through units within Economic Counterintelligence Second Direction and especially by those within Counterintelligence Third Direction within D.S.S.

Representative for the role of the obedient instrument assigned to the Securitate by the Party during the mentioned period is the way in which the external actions of influence and *lobby* to promote Romania were gradually turned into actions appropriate to the cult of personality of Nicolae Ceaușescu being automatically identified with Romania²⁵.

Paradoxically, at the same time with the transformation of the Securitate into an important lever within the mechanism of

²⁴ BERINDEI, Apud Mihnea – DOBRINCU, Dorin – GOȘU, Armand: op. cit. p. 320.

²⁵ Vezi, Luminița Banu, Acțiunea „Lumina” – Centrul de Informații Externe între lobby și cultul personalității, în „Caietele C.N.S.A.S.”, anul III, nr. 2 (6)/2010, pp. 131-160.

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edification of the cult of personality, a process, that seemed to have been premeditated, of total alienation of this institution because of regime's ideological objectives was unfolding. "Professional revolutionaries", people having the experience of the unlawfulness and long periods in imprisonment, were retired long time ago and the new officers, those who "came at the laid table", how the 'illegalists' used to mock at them, saw their role and status in society being undermined.

People who entered the system in the '50s and '60s, did that either from an ideological conviction, proper to the youth, or being attracted by material privileges and by the position and social prestige of the Securitate officer. Officer's prestige that had been maintained since the interwar period, combined with a substantial wage as compared to many other civil professions, personal and family safety in relation to potential political repressive measures, all these provided an increased adherence to the policy promoted by the regime and a co-interest in preserving it.

Crack on the monolithic Securitate: the duplicity

Or, the '80s, with all kind of material deprivations and aberrant political measures made by the leadership of the regime, irremediably cracked the ideological convictions and seriously altered the Securitate officers' social position, so that the devotion to the regime of a significant number of officers became more and more superficial.

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The frustrations created by the lack of reaction of the party's structures against the numerous identified and reported problems and the impunity of party activists who were culpable of that state of affairs, had an important role in this process²⁶. All these phenomena led the most of the Securitate officers to what the historian Cristian Troncotă defined as duplicity:

„The duplicity was the prevailing spirit within which the most of this institution's officers carried out their activities, at least in the last years of the communist regime. The duplicity could be found not only in professional activity, but in all what was thought and realized in family, in one's circle of friends, in discussions and even

²⁶ In this regard, General Nicolae Pleșiță gave a testimony: „The Apparatus was indignant. I was at Sala Palatului when people of Brasov raised in 1987. Before the meeting, I met General Iulian Vlad and [Emil] Macri. Vlad was the deputy of Postelnicu. At 10 years after the events from Valea Jiului, Vlad and Macri prepared to leave to Brasov. There were complaining. <<Lulica, I said, the comedy from Petrosany might be repeated, man!>>. Vlad was smart but he was sulky that I was standing at Grădiște, giving them advice. <<What should I do? I suggested to give to the people what they need, to prevent people from raising against them. And do you know what I was assigned to do? After I gave him the information in which I exposed also the deficiencies of the domain of food supply, do you know what task I was given by Ceaușescu? To go and help the city hall from Brasov that food, including eggs, to be correctly distributed among people! This are intelligence services created for? To distribute eggs in Brasov?>>” - Ochii și urechile poporului. Convorbiri cu generalul Nicolae Pleșiță. Dialoguri consemnate de Viorel Patrichi in perioada aprilie 1999-ianuarie 2001, prefață de Dan Zamfirescu, București, Editura Lumea, 2001, p. 109. Even if the dialog did not take place in these terms, the spirit of rebellion of the Securitate officers in front of insensibility and lack of reaction of political factor against the reported deficiencies, must have been very real.

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in the gestures of the Securitate officer as an <<ordinary citizen>>²⁷.

Thus, it came to the situation, apparently paradoxical, in December 1989, when a powerful repressive apparatus, exercised for a long time, passively assisted to the collapse of the regime that it had been serving for four decades.²⁸ As the former officers of the Securitate admit, D.S.S. “was not surprised by what was happening in December 1989, because they had known what was to be happen. They even warned Nicolae Ceaușescu, but he did

²⁷ TRONCOTĂ Cristian (2014): *Duplicitarii. Din istoria serviciilor de informații și securitate ale regimului comunist din România (1965-1989)*, ediția a II-a revăzută și adăugită. București. Editura Elion. p. 287.

²⁸ Despite of the “duplicity” of a part of officers, it cannot be denied that the Securitate as an institution did its duty to the Party until 1989. The fact that in Romania there couldn't be organized either “free unions” alike Polish “Solidarity”, or civic movement of intellectuals as is Czechoslovakia or Hungary, or a group of reformers within the Party, was a consequence of the sustained activity of the Securitate. We do not accept the deprecatory assessments regarding the Romanian people, synthesized in the insulting formula “the polenta does not explode”, but we consider that professionalism used by the Securitate to action in the so-called problem of “internal information”, made almost impossible any attempt to organize and few cases of open opposition remained quasi unknown for the population, in spite of radio broadcastings such as “Vocea Americii” and “Europa Libera”. Even the frail gestures of dissidence made “on the last minute”, such as “The letter of the six” (“Scrisoarea celor șase”), are rather subscribed, from our perspective, in the series of actions accomplished “with the police permission”. Therefore, not the supposed organic inability of Romanians to oppose to an oppressive regime permitted the intact preservation of the regime until December 1989, but rather the sustained, efficient activity of the “guardian” of the regime: The Securitate. The loyalty of a significant part of the Securitate during that time is not questioned either by the occidental analysts: “at the mid ‘80s the only sustainers of Ceaușescu were the members of the praetorian guards of the Securitate.” - R.J. Crampton, *Europa Răsăriteană în secolul al XX-lea... și după*, traducere de Cornelia Bucur, București, Editura Curtea Veche, 2002, p. 422.

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not take into account the information received”²⁹. Obviously, the attempt to throw the entire responsibility on the shoulders of the Secretary General of the party cannot cover the numerous questions about the behavior of the Securitate as an intelligence-repressive institution, before and during the days of the Romanian Revolution in December 1989.

Searching for permanent enemies: the conspiracies

Last but not least, it worth to remember the role played, for four decades, by the Securitate apparatus in the instrumentalization of one of the “founding myths” of any totalitarian regime: the conspiracy myth, of the enemy who eternally lies in wait³⁰. The conspiracy “rationalizes” all that is bad in society³¹: poverty, misery, unemployment, work accidents, and accounts for the necessity of an instrument to supervise and protect the people (not coincidentally, the first denomination of the political police of the communist regime in Romania was The General Direction of People’s Security (Direcția Generală a Securității Poporului).

But conspiracy did not have only the role to “explain” failures, difficulties, but also offered a remedy: detecting the scapegoat, “it

²⁹ TEODORESCU Filip (2009): „În decembrie 1989 a fost o lovitură de stat organizată de serviciile de informații străine”, în „Vitrării. Lumini și umbre - revista veteranilor din Serviciile Române de Informații”, anul I, nr. 1, decembrie 2009, p. 52.

³⁰ See for the functioning mode of this myth the reflections of GIRARDET Raoul (1997): *Mituri și mitologii politice*, traducere de Daniel Dimitriu; prefață de Gabriela Adameșteanu, Iași, Institutul European. pp. 35-42.

³¹ VOICU, George (2000): *Zei și zeițe. Cultura conspirației în România postcomunistă*, Iași, Editura Polirom. p. 15.

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makes a political diagnosis and, at the same time, recommends a political therapy³². The therapy chosen by the communist leaders of the '50s was a radical one, bloody, proper to the totalitarian regimes. As Raoul Girardet observed, "from the Jacobin terror to the Stalinist terror, the accusation of conspiracy had never ceased to be used by power in order to get rid of suspects or opponents, to legitimate its purges and to hide its own errors or deceptions"³³. Thus, physical elimination or political and economic neutralization of the "class enemies" was followed by the purge of its own ranks and the removal of the rivals of the unique leader. In all these processes, the role of the Securitate was very important, either we talk about "the trials of the saboteurs from the Channel (Canal)", in September 1952, or we refer to the elimination of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu or the imprisonment of Vasile Luca.

The late action of this regime in 1968, a „reparatory” one in declared purposes, had certainly not the significance of a fundamental change, but was circumscribed to another myth, that of the savior leader, the restorer of legality and order. The 1968 moment deserves itself a detailed analysis, the Securitate being, again, "the star" of the damnation trial of the former leader and his unrepentant acolytes, reassuming at the same time the mission of "shield and buckler" for the regime, embodied by Nicolae Ceaușescu.

After we have overviewed the context of foundation the institution, its organizational avatars, its political subordination and institutional alliance that supported it, a question imposes itself: What did remain from the Securitate after 41 years of activity, under its

³² Ibidem

³³ GIRARDET Raoul, op. cit., p. 35.

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different various official titles and under its various types of organization? What are “the passive” and “the active” of an activity which ultimately targeted the entire nation and each domain of the private and public life? Of course that many answers may be formulated starting from differentiated evaluation grids.

From our point of view, “the balance sheet” is a negative one and when we assert this we consider especially “the long period” of history. Of course that crimes and abuses committed will remain the main charges and will not be forgotten or forgiven especially by victims’ families! Of course that institutional failure in defending the regime and leaders, mission assumed by military oath, is beyond any doubt. As obvious as that is the fact that, at one moment or another, the institution prevented a terrorist attack or an industrial catastrophe, brought secret technologies from abroad or thwarted some attacks on the national integrity and sovereignty. But all of this altered limited segments either had a tactical importance in a certain political, economic, or military context.

Epilogue: the repercussions on today’s generation

What seems to us to be truly blamable is the fact that might be called “the evil rooting” in the Romanian society or its “trivialization”, if we take a formulation of Hanna Arendt, subsequently used by Marius Oprea in a similar context. At more than a quarter of a century after the dissolution of the institution, the contempt for the human rights and fundamental freedoms, mistrust in law, justice and independence are common phenomena for many citizens. The mistrust in others, the society atomization, the fear to express freely an opinion contradicting the Authority, the fright that you are addressing to a “sneak” or the fact that what you are saying is taped, the tendency to see everywhere undercover

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officer and “manufactured files”, are daily realities in Romania today, affecting to a great extent even the generations that have not directly endured the practices of the Securitate.

All you read above give us the right to believe that the biggest harm was done by the Securitate not to a person or another, not to one or another category of “objectives”, but to the idea of “citizen” itself, with inalienable rights and freedoms. Being subdued to arbitrariness for many centuries, unprotected by a well-articulated judicial system, subdued to the laws of whim, as changeable and temporary as the lords who ruled, Romanians were still learning the alphabet of the democracy at the moment when the communist regime established. In this context the Securitate, led and protected by the almighty Party, dispersed the frail democratic behaviors, making the notional law to be ridiculous and showing, too often, that the justice of force triumphs and not the force of justice will overcome.

Taking these aspects into account, knowing the history of the Securitate becomes, from our perspective, not a satisfaction of a simple curiosity, more or less scientific, but a duty of any citizen who desires to live truly free in a democratic society made up of non-negotiable values of an indubitable permanence.

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