

*Florian BANU*

## **THE POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIAN SOCIETY AND THE SECURITY'S SPECTRE**

Searching the past, from the political point of view, reveals certain characteristics which make Romania's voice distinct among the other former members of the socialist camp. One of these is the most brutal way of cutting off with the previous regime. Romania is the only ex-communist country which removed the communist leadership by street fights causing numerous victims, and, also, the only country where the army units and various obscure forces (allegedly belonging to the secret services) opened fire against the people.

The extremely intense debates beginning with the very first months of the year 1990, upon the presence and the role played by the Security in the mechanism of maintaining the communism in Romania were justified by the way in which the turning point from December 1989 took place and also by the suspicions related to the Security's acts in the anti-communist movements repression.

For many people the institution of Security or "the armed arm of the Party" was to be blamed for the horrors brought by the communist regime. As a consequence of this perception the debates upon the abuses, the crimes and the survival of the Security in post-communist Romania kept alive the interest from the part of both civil society and political areas, proving thus the idea of a real "Security syndrome" present in the subconscious of the Romanian people.

Before developing an analysis on the persistence of the Security's spectre in the social mentality, let us present a brief history of this institution. Established in August 1948 under the name "The General Direction for People Security", the institution functioned under various labels, such as "The General Direction of State Security", "The Ministry of the State Security", "The Department for State Security", till 1990.

This organization, popularly called "the Security" or "Secu", fulfilled various duties, but especially those of political surveillance and repression of the crimes and offences against the socialist state, collecting information, censorship and controlling the borders.

At the beginning, back in 1948, the Security had 3970 employees<sup>1</sup> but their number rose increasingly up to 10 423 employees<sup>2</sup> in December 1951 and from the middle of the fifties till the end their number was about 15 000 persons.

The reduced number of employees<sup>3</sup> was compensated by creating a vast network of informers, a network counting, after some sources, between 400.000<sup>4</sup> and 700.000 persons<sup>5</sup>.

These informers were organized, according to the type of the provided “service”, in host of conspiratorial houses; collaborators, informers and residents came from the most various social strata and were everywhere from the classrooms to the asylums<sup>6</sup>.

The Security’s members were recruited – especially during the first decade of the institution’s existence – on bases like social provenience and attachment towards the Communist Party, all mixed with the hate for the “class enemy”. This system led to the fact that security officers came almost entirely from social strata like very poor peasants and unqualified workers.

The members’ schooling level in 1956, eight years after the Security’s start, enlighten us: 13.85 % graduated only four classes (elementary school), 17.16 % passed five – six classes and only 3.36 % of the employees graduated a college.

The lack of professional knowledge was substituted by an unusual brutality and by disregarding the laws, even those of communist regime in the attempt of spreading terror among population. The midnight arrests, the unthinkable tortures in the Security’s jails, the picking up from the working place or even street, all followed by a long period of time during which the family could not find out anything about their beloved – had two main effects – the fright seeded in every man’s soul and mind that he might be the next and the distortion of reality in such manner that the evil became normal, which is, from many points of view, more dangerous than the previous.

<sup>1</sup> Dennis Deletant, *Ceaușescu și Securitatea. Constrângere și disidență în România anilor 1965-1989*, București, 1998, p.42-43.

<sup>2</sup> *Raport asupra activității Direcției Generale a Securității Statului pe anul 1951*, în “22-plus”, nr.18, 12 July 1995.

<sup>3</sup> The similar institution, STASI, from the Republic of the Democratic Germany had, back in 1968, 100 000 employees with full time for a population lesser than half in comparison to Romania, Delphine Serre, *O poliție politică în dezbatere: Fenomenul Stasi*, Iași, 1999, p.13.

<sup>4</sup> The declaration of Virgil Magureanu, the leader of Romanian Service of Information, in “Cuvantul”, 18-24 August 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Silviu Brucan, *Generația irosită*, București, 1992, p.198.

<sup>6</sup> In the Security’s registers, in Sibiu, there were found the names of 98 children between 9 and 16 years, Dennis Deletant, *Ceaușescu și Securitatea...*, p. 362.

The treat was increased by the fact than practically nobody was to be spared by the "long hand of Security" and there was no judge power you could complain to. To all these added the long periods of imprisonment in the labour camps to which so many persons were constrained by the so-called "administrative decisions". These were nothing more than orders, given by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, by which all persons, suspected to be unfaithful to the regime, could be locked in labour camp to re-educated them.

Beginning with the sixties, the Security faced a continue process of reorganization especially after what happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968. this means that the employees were now checked up more severe, were chosen primarily from college graduate, all these doubled by a tendency to minimize the former officers, particularly if they followed schools in the Soviet Union and were, more likely, collaborators to the Soviet Secret services.

In the same time, the emphasis moved from the brutal repercussions to the discouraging which was perfectly possible after two decades of fright seeded by Security in every man's mind. But al these embellishing operations did not change the fundamentals of political police which carried on its arbitrary interference in people's lives. Meanwhile, the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu succeed in subordinating totally the Security and in transforming it in his own department.

The Security's well-known fidelity towards dictator determined many Romanians to embrace the idea that its officers fought for Nicolae Ceausescu saving, in December 1989. because of this the new leadership installed in Bucharest integrated the Security into the Ministry of National Defence structures. The Army was at that time the most credible institution and Romania's streets were full of shouts like "Army is with us!" or "The Army and the Revolution!". On 20<sup>th</sup> February 1990, the Romanian Government brought the news to the people: The Security ceased to exist as an institution and a new National service was born. It is to be remarked that the announcement was made under street pressure which asked for the abolition of Security demand formulated by the American secretary of State, James Baker<sup>7</sup>.

On 26<sup>th</sup> February 1990, the Romanian Government made official that Security's phone interception and mail censorship ceased to exist and invited foreign journalists to visit the interception centres in some of biggest factories from Bucharest.

These deeds of the new power, apparently democratic and transparent, had been faced with suspicion by important segments of the new civil

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<sup>7</sup> I. M. Pacepa, *Moștenirea Kremlinului*, București, 1993, p. 481.

society. Many of those who had to reckon with the Security's officers were surprised to see them named in important public positions or being around key political people. Besides, even the process of reorganization of the Romanian Secret Services was not to be trustful.

Thus, the External Information Service (S.I.E.) was been created on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1990 by changing the Centre of External Information of Security State Department. Its main attribution was to gather information regarding the threatening against Romania. The leadership was entrusted to the general Mihai Caraman, one of the most well-known agents of communist Romania.

At the head of The Romanian Service of Information (established through Decree no. 191/1990, issued by Ion Iliescu – the leader of C.P.U.N.) was appointed Virgil Magureanu, a man with a long activity as a Security officer.

Such appointments, added to some political events developed in the first part of the year 1990, arose suspicions among large segments of civil society and caused the appearance of phrases like “the stolen revolution”, “neo-communist cryptic – securest regime”.

The apprehension increased since the new power brutally denied the eight amendment in “Timisoara Proclamation” which asked for removing the former officers of Security and members of the *nomenklatura* of Communist Party from their public positions. The ruthless putting down of the students meeting, from University Square from Bucharest, bringing in “commandos” formed by coal miners from Jiu Valley to Bucharest to support the new power, taking over the public television, reminded Romanians about Communist regime ways and reinforced the idea that the Security was to be find behind these actions.

To all these added the questions left without answers referring to the secret accounts, belonging to the Security in the foreign banks<sup>8</sup>, to the under cover agents who went on functioning in various state structures<sup>9</sup> as well as to the number of the security officers left active in the new secret services. Regarding to this last problem, the suspicions increased after the contradictory declarations of Virgil Magureanu, the new chief of the Romanian Service of Information. He presented a report on 22<sup>nd</sup> November

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<sup>8</sup> Petre Mihai Băcanu, *Conturile Securității*, “România Liberă”, 6 August 1994; idem, *Conturile O.V. 78*, “România Liberă”, 9 August 1994; idem, *Lista conturilor Securității*, “România Liberă”, 10,11,12 august 1994; Bogdan Ficeac, *Conturile Securității*, “România Liberă”, 19 February 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Petre Mihai Băcanu, *Securiști și ambasadori*, “România Liberă”, 14 April 1992; idem, “*Spălarea*” *Securității în diplomație*, “România Liberă”, 25 November 1992; Ilie Flonta, *Ofițerii de securitate aveau funcții și salarii mari la Departamentul cultelor*, “Evenimentul zilei”, 26 November 1996.

1990, in front of the reunited chambers of the Parliament, when affirmed that, on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1989, the Security had 14299 military cadres, and later, in an interview, he said that, at the end of the year 1990, from Romanian Service of Information had been eliminated 15 000 officers inherited from the former Security<sup>10</sup>.

The Romanians' suspicions were deepened by a series of scandals provoked mainly by the new Romanian Service of Information. Thus the journalists uncovered the attempt to set on fire a transport of documents, on the Jiu Valley as well as that of destroying some documents at Berevoiesti<sup>11</sup>.

The appearance of transparencies showed in the very first months of existence of Romanian Service of Information, had been replaced by an almost total opacity which renewed the accusation of illegal phones interception of the most uneasy persons for the Power<sup>12</sup>. The concern that the old interception centres were reinstalled had been founded by the so-called case "Terasa Anda". It was about two agents, belonging to the Romanian Service of Information, caught filming Tania Ardeleanu, the author of the articles incriminating the president Iliescu as a former KGB agent<sup>13</sup> and also a journalist at the newspaper "Ziua".

On this background both a civic and a political debate started on the topic of the necessity to confront the past through the perspective given by the Security Services activities. "Is it necessary to arouse the past? Is there any good to us to reopen old wounds and to start witch hunts? Shall not we, by any chance, ignore the future if we deepen ourselves passionately in the search of the past?" these were the questions used by those who did not see the useful of investigating Romanians' "recent memory".

On the other side dwelled the supporters of remembering, who sustained that ignoring the past it only leads to a present haunted by the communism phantoms. The controversy over this problem gained ground in our country when it was compared to what happened in Germany: back in 1990, in the very first phase, and then, from 1991, due to the law of the STASI files, it was guaranteed to the citizens the access to their own file, as well as the possibility to check up if some key positions were occupied by those who collaborated with the political police.

Many voices criticised and rejected the German experience on the ground that, similar measures would reopen old wounds, would unfairly

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<sup>10</sup> Cornel Ivanciuc, *Politica de cadre a SRI*, „22-plus”, nr. 18, 12 July 1995.

<sup>11</sup> „România Liberă”, 21 May 1991.

<sup>12</sup> Cornel Dumitrescu, *Pacea lovește în regimul Iliescu: centrele de ascultare funcționează ca pe vremea lui Ceaușescu*, „Ziua”, 13 January 1996; *Poliția politică funcționează bine mersi. Telefoanele ziarului Ziua sunt interceptate*, „Ziua”, 20 September 2000.

<sup>13</sup> N.C. Munteanu, *Dacă îi dai nas lui Ivan*, în „22”, nr. 27, 5-11 July 1995.

destroy reputations. More than that, they sustained that Security's files are far from being reliable sources in searching the near past. It was affirmed that officers, simply made up informers or enlisted innocent people only to reach the planned number of informers as well as in any other area of activity, in a communist society the political police had, also, a plan which had to be fulfilled. Besides these, it was emphasized another aspect: lots of files had been destroyed, defalcated or, others, modified by eliminating important documents.

In spite of all these, the political debate regarding the study of the communist past and of the documents belonging to the former Security started as early as 1990. It was the former prisoner of state, Constantin Ticu Dumitrescu, who proposed, inside the ad-hoc Council for National Unity, a law to protect the Security's archive but the proposal remained without answer.

In 1992 the parliamentary fraction of the National Peasantry Party from the Chamber of Deputies initiated a bill on the problem of the restitution of literary manuscripts, documents, archives, art pieces collected by the repression representatives between 1945 and 1989. The proposal was denied by the Legislative technical department of the Chamber of Deputies. On 18<sup>th</sup> February 1992 the Committee for Searching the Abuses filed a bill with the following topic: the right to examine the following, inquiry and judgement files drawn up by the former Security' bodies. This bill stipulated that every Romanian citizen, having residence both in the country and abroad, could have access personal, free and unconditioned, for a complete examination of his own file drawn up between 6<sup>th</sup> March 1945 – 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1989. The mass-media access to this kind of file were to be available only after the file's titular or his offspring's agreed upon<sup>14</sup>.

A group of deputies representing the opposition filed, on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1992, a bill which borrowed a lot of elements belonging to the law of lustrum enforced in Czechoslovakia an year ago. According to this bill, the former Security's archive was to be stored in the Parliament's Warehouse and handled after by an Office responsible for the reservation and administration of the archive belonging to the State Security Department, office which would be active for at least 15 years.

The bill stipulated the obligation for the statesmen to resign within 30 days if they had been authors of denunciations or employees of the former

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<sup>14</sup> Liviu Marius Bejenaru, *Dezbaterea politică cu privire la accesul la propriul dosar: cazul românesc*, in C.N.S.A.S., "Totalitarism și rezistență, teroare și represiune în România comunistă", București, 2001, p. 309.

Security. A committee interfered in the case of those who decline and could ask for the guilty ones demission<sup>15</sup>.

The most tenacious fighter for uncovering Security as a political police and for making possible, by law, for every citizen to consult his own file proved to be the senator Constantin Ticu Dumitrescu. On 29<sup>th</sup> December 1993 he registered at the Permanent Bureau of the Senat a bill asking for excluding the statesmen who proved to be, after a checking, Security collaborators and also, for entrusting the Security's archives, in order to be looked for and studied, to a Council formed by persons beyond any morally suspicions, at least three of them being proposed by the Association of the Former Prisoners of State.

The bill seemed to have great chances of passing especially if we consider the meeting of the Chamber of Deputies from 16<sup>th</sup> December 1993. Then, the same Ticu Dumitrescu initiated a vote concerning the former Security's collaborators seen as unworthy to be high in the social scale, vote signed by 178 deputies and 109 senators<sup>16</sup>. The vote's message underlined that "it has become unacceptable and unworthy the appointment, election or the keeping in the structures of the political power, in functions of decision and leadership, in the public authority or institution in the position to lead or concealing the education of any level and so on, of all those persons who willingly worked as Security's informers between 1945-1989".

During next years had been filed bills concerning the access to the Security's archives and the elimination of the collaborators and ex-Security officers from public life but every time there was a lack of political will in bringing these projects into life, even if the signals from civil society part became stronger and stronger. The election from the fall of 1996 aroused the hope in a quick answer to this moral problem, especially because the Romanian Party of Social Democracy failed and that was the party pointed as the successor of Communist system.

The senator Ticu Dumitrescu revised his initial bill because of the new information gathered in a visit research in Germany where he studied the German law referring to one's access to his own file and also the Gauck Office's way of organisation and work. The new bill was filed in January 1997. the hopes in a quickly pass, taking into consideration the high number of ex-prisoners of state in both chambers of the Parliament and also the manifest democratic orientation of the new leadership proved to be unfortunately without bases.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 310.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 313.

The bill's initiator hit by a strong disapproval even from the part of his colleagues and the bill was to be changed in so many key points so that the result did not represent any longer a law to uncover the Security but on the contrary.

The law was promulgated by the President of Romania on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1999 on the basis of decree number 412/1999 and under the title of "The law referring to one's access to his own file and uncovering Security as political police".

After ten years from the bloody removal of the communist regime, Romania had finally a law which permitted the uncovering of the previous injustices and every citizen could meet a hidden part, till then, of his life, a "slice" of his own past as the political police at that time seem it. It has to be emphasized that the law does not nominate any form of punishment or interdiction for those who collaborated or were agents of the Security. The persons who run for elections or are appointed in some categories of public positions have only the obligation to declare on his responsibility the involvement in the Security's activity. It is to be underlined that, unlike the German law, for example, the Romanian one does not incriminate Security as a whole but only "those structures created for installing and maintaining the totalitarian – communist power as well as for the reducing and forbidding the fundamental human rights and liberties"<sup>17</sup>.

How could anybody explain the powerful force of resistance, lasting for almost a decade, numerous political force against facing the past? We believe that a possible explanation, apart from its paradox form, is that of an extended frighten shared not only by the yesterday oppressors but also by their victims.

For the doers it was to be expected at least theoretically, social degradation and isolation from their fellow – beings when the victims are often scared by facts which are better to remain unknown. Their real problem might be linked not only by the enlightening of the hidden faces of the past but especially by the future.

The fears are fed by what the informer took away, maybe forever, from them – trust in other people, the serenity which is always the basis of a friendship<sup>18</sup>.

An example of this kind is one of the first persons who studied his own file drawn up by the political police and after that, he confessed to the journalists like this: "I have identified a number of «benevolent» colleagues

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<sup>17</sup> Legea nr. 187/1999 în "Monitorul Oficial", nr. 603, 9 December 1999, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Wolfgang Engler, *Mecanisme colaboraționismului în regimul comunist*, "Lettre internationale", autumn 1997, p. 33.



who denounced me. After twenty years I have not any revengeful desire but I'll avoid meeting them. I have asked to see my file not so much for me, I was brought down anyway, but for my children and grandchildren, to be able to spare them of future troubles. I can now teach them to be more suspicious, more diplomats"<sup>19</sup>.

Once became effective the law on settling free access to his own file and revealing Security as a political police, got full attention from mass-media and civil society part but also dealt with many obstructions from the power and secret Services part. Thus, the organism entrusted with the law application, "The National Council for Studying the Security Archives" was not in position to function in a building of its own (proper location) not even after an year from the law enforcement in spite of the period stipulated to adjust this problem, that of no more than a month.

The excessive delay of the law enforcement was the cause of a general apathy among population. The parliamentary and presidential election from 2000 year were the first after the communism's collapse when the candidates were checked up from the collaboration with the former political police point of view.

Even if some of them were identified as ex-collaborators the impact was almost zero. The sociologist Alin Teodorescu said that making known the list of the candidates proved as Security collaborators "does not interest anybody any longer, the problem of the ex-collaborators concerns only a small group of people, the elites, and not the entire public", position adopted also by the man of politics Cristian Parvulescu<sup>20</sup>.

The main cause of this apathy can be identified in the feeling shared by more and more people that, in spite of the bloody events happened in December 1989, the same figures, more or less visibly, lead Romania. In fact the researches prove that 63 percentage from the leading positions are filled with people who held such positions before 1989 as well<sup>21</sup>. The perception of the former Security officers as being omnipresent and omnipotent is easy to identify not only at the masses level but also of the elite's. The initiator of the law under discussion, Ticu Dumitrescu, declared in December 2000 that, according to the data known by him, around 2600 security officers hold public positions and they mainly come from those who developed activities under cover<sup>22</sup>. In February 2001, Gabriel Andreescu, one of the most

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<sup>19</sup> "Spovedaniile" celor care și-au studiat ieri propriul dosar, "Curentul", 29 March 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Luminița Costali, *Dosarele Securității fără efect la alegeri*, "Jurnalul național", 24 November 2000.

<sup>21</sup> *Deschiderea dosarelor Securității – un nou măr al discordiei*, "Curentul", 20 March 2001.

<sup>22</sup> Roxana Andronic, *Ticu Dumitrescu dezvăluie că 2600 de securiști dețin funcții publice*, "Ziua", 16-17 December 2000.

remarkable personality of Romanian civil society, declared: “After eleven years since Revolution, the security is still in charge”, an opinion sustained also by Horia Roman Patapievici: “most of the people especially those from outside the system, learn that ex officers are everywhere from the Parliament of Romania to the most successful business firms”<sup>23</sup>.

The change of leadership brought by the election from 2000 did not blur the Security’s shadows haunting the Romanian society but confirmed to the people their suspicions referring to the late institution. The most present case in all mass-media was that of the ex security officer, Ristea Priboi, designated in the position of leader to the Parliamentary Committee of Controlling the Service of External Information. This attempt of subordinating the means of control from the civil society’s part by former Security officers gave rise to an wave of protests all over the country and even, kept the attention of foreign annalists.

Katrin Lauer wrote in the daily newspaper “Süddeutsche Zeitung” on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2001: “The Ion Iliescu’s regime treats the officers of high rank, belonging to the ex- Ceausescu political police, with new cosy positions ten years late Security is still alive” and, at the beginning of March 2001, D.P.A. press agency published an analysis: “The dreaded Security of the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu is, no less than eleven years since the new regime came into place, a never really dead past”. Meanwhile, the power from Bucharest on in key positions officers with many years of duty in the service of the former Security.

A senator, representing the Party in charge has justified with serenity this situation: “We cannot afford letting the officers of the former Security to leave. They are people specialized in Romanian Service of Information, who graduated different schools. There are money invested in them. How long every position on political stage is held by former members of Communist Party why should not we give access to the former Security officers as well?”<sup>24</sup>.

We shall remind only one more situation of appointing an ex security officer in a key position. On 8<sup>th</sup> February 2001, the Minister of Justice, Rodica Stanoiu, named as chief of the Independent Service for Protection and Anticorruption (SIPA), actually the service of information belonging to the Ministry of Justice, the professor Marian Ureche. He was working till 1989 as an officer within First Direction of Security, direction dealing with internal information<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Horia Tabacu, *Securiștii-ofițeri mirosiți de societatea civilă*, “Ziua”, 23 February 2001.

<sup>24</sup> The Senator Sergiu Nicolaescu’s declaration in “Cotidianul”, 14 February 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Bogdan Comaroni, *Un nou caz de securist la serviciile secrete*, „Ziua”, 20 March 2001.

Another example of the ways used by the former officers to penetrate all the structures of the political, economic and civil life is given by the leadership of the Romanian Association of the Former Prisoners of State –the branch from Brasov. They made public the Ioan Sarbu case, a former security officer, well known oppressor, and also the case of Stelian Alexandru, a former major of Security from Brasov. They obtained, by tricks, acts proving no more no less than their status as... former prisoners of state<sup>26</sup>.

The new Power saw with many suspicions the beginning of activity of “the National Council for Studying the Security’s Archives”. The premier, Adrian Nastase, considered that the law referring to somebody’s access to his own file and to uncover the Security’s “creates echoes and waves which have no other effect than keeping us stuck in the problems of the past. We have the duty to solve so many things for the future that looking back s a burden in our way. The people will not live better if certain truths are discovered in the past”<sup>27</sup>.

Almost in the same time with the premier’s declaration, in order to prove the jeopardise hidden by Secret Service’s Archives, a mass-media scandal arose concerning the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. A number of newspapers published a document drawn up by Security in 1949 according to which the Patriarch would have taken part, in 1941, in destruction of a synagogue would have been known for homosexual practices<sup>28</sup>. The document incriminating the leader of Romanian orthodox Church, one of the most respected institution in Romania, brought back in the spotlight the debate over the utility of searching the recent past and the necessity of opening up instead of keeping under a seal the Secret Archives.

“The chance” made that the man who published the document was an employee of the National Council for Studying the security’s Archives and even if the institution underlined that the document was identified before its establishing and placed itself on the opposite position, the questions regarding the positive role played by such institutions became numerous.

A number of important intellectuals adopted immediately a position of fighting for the right of knowing the historical truth. Ana Blandiana, well known anticommunist dissident and leader of Civic Alliance, declared: “the fight against memory is the fight against historic, cultural, spiritual truth, a fight, finally, against your own identity and culture (...) The memory is not

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<sup>26</sup> Vasile Şelaru, *Ioan Sârbu din securist a ajuns... deţinut politic*, “România liberă”, 28 August 2001.

<sup>27</sup> “Naţional”, 14 March 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Florian Bichir, *Umbra Securităţii loveşte în Patriarhul Teoctist*, “Evenimentul Zilei”, 23 March 2001.

the path towards the past but to the future, only some people wish to make it look like the past but others do not”<sup>29</sup>.

Similar opinions also came from people who use the right to study their own file drawn up by Security. First person in this situation said that “there is no development for a nation without truth, the truth assumed will lead us to another image of the future”. Another citizen who studied his father’s file affirmed: I gained more peace of mind after studying the file and I praise even more the image of my father, an honest man”. The same feeling of pride for her parent’s moral verticality shows one lady affirmation: “All my life I wished to learn the truth about my parents; the dreams comes true now at the age of 58”.

In the same time, the access to the files reinforced the feeling of their “alteration” by a criminal hand and the idea that obscure forces continue blocking the free access to the information contained by them as the right provided by law stipulates.

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2001, after consulting his file, a citizen said: “the most painful aspect is that I consider myself under the same supervision now, as before 1989”. Another one: “the precise events which made me asking for studying my personal file are not here, so, that certain papers which are in my interest area, are still hidden”. Not a different opinion showed, after studying the file, the ex-statesman Serban Radulescu Zoner, a supporter of the law: “It is not admissible for those who would like to consult their Security files, to get only bites and pieces, as I could notice”.

On March of the year 2002, the academician Alexandru Zub, made the following remark regarding his own file : “Personally, I have tried to look over my file and all I have got was a only an incomplete one, interrupted around 1968. There was nothing referring to the next period. More than that, the existing information was severely selected (...). What it is happening is very gravely. The information is selected, probably, from case to case”<sup>30</sup>.

According to all these, what does the image of the Security and its representatives become for the common outlook of the Romanians? The Security is still understood by many of the Romanians, at the age of over thirty years –who knew it before 1989- as an evil institution leading from behind the country’s destiny. The former officers of Security are, today, prosperous businessmen, hold prominent positions in Parliament or in Government and often defy their former victims. The fear spread in the consciousness of millions of citizens is, maybe, one of the worst effect of the communism, on long term, upon Romanian society: the fear of the man

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<sup>29</sup> “România liberă”, 30 martie 2001.

<sup>30</sup> “22”, 9-15 aprilie 2002.

besides you, the fear of uttering or writing openly your thoughts, the fear that, one day, the Power has the possibility to make you vanish.

The collapse of the communism, at European level, required, naturally, a change of the elites. But this particular aspect was not wanted in Romania. Recently, Christian Ladwig, the political representative of the Federal Authority for Documents' Administration belonging to State Safety Service from German Democratic Republic –STASI said, in an interview, that the main benefit of studying STASI's archives was to ease the change of elite<sup>31</sup>.

Unfortunately, in Romania, the enforcement of the law regarding the access to the Security's files waited for a decade from the events happened in December 1989. Meanwhile the people understood that the new leaders come from the former Party *nomenklatura*, that Secret Services preserved its unchallenged powers and, as a consequence, show a lethargy attitude<sup>32</sup>.

In our opinion, avoiding to face the past and embracing a therapy of forgetting are the main threatening at Romanian contemporary society's sanity.

If the communist system, in its classical forms, is considered old and impossible to reinforce, the post communist way of thinking is a constant obstacle for the new democratic society.

The eradication of the old mentalities cannot become real neither by ignoring nor by idealizing the communist epoch but the process has a chance after confronting a past which has been identified, over which we have dwelt upon and which, finally, has become clear to us.

Over the last few years, many leaders of state asked for forgiveness, on their people behalf to those nations or minorities put to torture in the course of history. Communist regimes collapses brought forth mix feelings: the official guilty of the former leaders mingled with the diffuse feeling of self culpability present in some social categories but also with the temptations of taking the blame by the whole masses of people.

On our path towards a free, democratic society we carry with us this burden of the recent past which slows us down. To live in denial is, naturally, more than unadvisable so what it has left for us is what the Bible calls "to speak the truth" – the only way of assuming a difficult past.

**Consiliul Național pentru Cercetarea Arhivelor Securității,  
București**

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem.*