

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES REGARDING  
RESISTANCE AND DISSIDENCE IN ROMANIA (1945–989)<sup>1</sup>

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*The present article is an analysis of Romanian society transition from communism to democracy, which pinpoints the mechanisms of the options and historical behavior of political, cultural and civic elites in Romania, Romanian communities and religious institutions.*

**Key Words:** *communism, resistance, dissidence.*

THE TYPOLOGY OF THE POST-DECEMBER ELITES. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evolution of the Romanian post-war society brought up since 1989 at least 8 vectors of attitude regarding the communist regime, specific to:

- members at the head of the party (Nomenklatura) and the communist regime activists (mainly Romanians), some of them in favour, others forming a political dissidence towards the Ceaușescu regime (most of the time under the USSR protection);
- agents of the Soviet power (mainly with other ethnic membership, actively involved especially in the first part of the communist regime);
- opportunists of the communist system;
- Romanian Diaspora;
- dissidence;
- political prisoners;
- professional, cultural, religious groups in the country, that kept a maximum possible distance in exerting their profession towards the communist ideology and the abuse policy;
- spontaneous resistance of the Romanian community (isolation in family, profession, culture, etc.).

In spite of their heterogeneity, each one of these types (that can be regrouped in five big categories: *members of the Nomenklatura, collaborators (internal or*

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*external), exile, dissidence and resistance)* has influenced, directly or indirectly, the post-communist public agenda and its priorities, bringing a particular attitude and concept set of instruments and an own vision over the realities and the ways of transforming the Romanian society.

The legitimacy of the post-December elite was built starting from attitudes of opponency to the communist political system, reason to appear, in the post-communist Romanian society, for a perverse phenomenon, the inflation of pseudo-dissidence (Enache, 2005, p. 499) on the one hand, and on the other hand, the intransigence taken to extreme, the intention process for all the resistance forms evaluated as not perfect, moving the attention from the aggressor to the victim, blaming it. (Bădescu, Ungheanu, 2000, p. 135)

### THE GRAVITY OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME'S EFFECTS

The inadequacy of the intransigence of one part of the diaspora and the youth intellectuals to the historical reality or the sham of post-factum presenting the small explosions of complaints of some intellectuals from the communist period as significant opponency, could not be understood without looking over, even briefly, the dramatic situation Romania has passed during the communism.

Since 1947, when the borders are severally and hermetically sealed, the Romanian society lives the experience of a huge forced-camp. In the first twenty years of existence, the communist regime in Romania was, through its actions, one of the toughest in Eastern Europe. The process of becoming Soviet severely affected all the vital sectors of the country: politics, culture and education, religion, economy. The reprisal were mainly directed to valuable people from all the areas, the goal being the falling apart of the Romanian society. (Ștefănescu, A., 2005a)

The communist system did not start in Romania as a result of a state power take-over by an internal political group, but was instaurated by the Sovietic occupation regime<sup>2</sup>.

The ethnic composition of the communist party members shows a lack of sustain for the party by the Romanian majority population. (Annex, Chart 2) According to the report made at eight months after the signing of the truce with the

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<sup>2</sup> 114,000 Romanian soldiers were taken as war prisoners by the Soviets as a result of the order of stop firing received along with the front reversal and were sent to prison camps in the Soviet Union. Approximately one third of them died of hunger and exhaustion on the way to the prison camps (Vlad, Baboș, 1996).

During the first year, the occupation regime significantly lowered the number of Romanian intervention military forces, increasing instead the number of Soviet troupes. The police soldier and frontier guard staff is reduced, between 1944 and 1946, from 74.500 to 58,000 and that of Romanian armed forces from 419,000 soldiers in May 1945, to 136,000 in December 1947. Instead, the number of Soviet stationary troupes in Romania is increased from 80,000 in May 1945 to 615,000 in March 1946 (Denize, 2005).

USSR by the chief of the organizing section of Central Committee of PCR (Romanian Communist Party), Iosif Ranghet, the Romanian communist party had on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1944 “less than 1000 party members, including the comrades from prisons and concentration camps”, from which only 80 in the capital. (National Central Historical Archives, C.C. of PCR fund, Chancellor’s Office, 32/1945 file, apud **Magazin istoric**, 1994) Romania thus records the smallest amount of communist party members compared to the total population of the country, out of all the European countries. (Annex, Chart 1)<sup>3</sup>

A repressive instrument of the communist leadership, *The Security* (The General Direction of People’s Security) becomes active from the moment of the truce signing with the USSR on September 12<sup>th</sup> 1944 and is recognized as an official state organ on August 30<sup>th</sup> 1948 by the 221 Decree. The Security was created by SMERSH (The Soviet Counter-espionage Department) as a division of NKVD, in order to fulfill the mission to replace the secret services from the countries occupied by the USSR with Soviet type structures.

Until 1960-1965, the superior administration of the Security was formed entirely by agents of the Soviet intelligence services, the links with Moscow of one part of the Security being kept until 1989, with all the personnel replacement policy practiced by the Ceausescu regime. The informative activity of the Security was the main source of information that led to the mass arrests in the communist terror period. (Deletant, 2006)

The 16 Article from the truce signed with the USSR in 1944 stated the instillation of censorship in press, books, printings, radio, television and mail (Gabany, 2000a, p. 14). Until 1946, over 2000 titles were banned, so that the number would get to over 8000 in 1948 (Badescu, Ungheanu, 2000, p. 12). In 1948, 80% of the total number of the professors from the Philosophy Faculty was discarded and 13.000 of all the 37.000 students throughout the country were expelled (Cretzianu, 1956, p. 207). In only one night (May 15 to 16, 1948) over 4000 students are arrested in all the country’s university campuses (Braşoveanu, Pavelescu, 2004), part of them being held in the Pitesti Penitentiary, where they entered the physical and psychical violence reeducation programs (Buruiană, 2005). Between 1946 and 1953 and then 1956 – 1959, numerous arrests take place among Romanian writers and culture people. In early ‘60s, in the communist jails there are, simultaneously, hundreds of writers (Stoienescu, 2005).

In 1949 the collectivization process of agriculture begins, until 1960 hundreds of thousands of peasants being convicted or imprisoned without reason and sent to labour camps. In 1946, the leaders of the major political parties were arrested and convicted to prison, most of them ending dead from the prison extermination regime.

The churches and the religious organisations throughout the country are held under observation and persecuted<sup>4</sup>. In 1948 the inventory of Orthodox monkish

<sup>3</sup> We refer to the countries with known data, the only ones included in the chart.

<sup>4</sup> In 1948, a significant part of the Greek-Catholic believers returned to the Romanian Orthodox Church, the others suffered severe persecutions.

institutions and the census of the monks all over Romania are finalized, the police actions of communists aiming especially the monasteries, under the pretext that they are hiding resistance groups or people wanted by the state for their political options<sup>5</sup>. (Jinga, 2001-2002)

By the 410 Decree from October 28, 1959, as a result of the direct proposal of the Internal Affairs Minister Alexandru Draghici, some monasteries and religious associations are dissolved, some respected monks are pulled out of monastic life, etc. (Jinga, 2001-2002; Enache, 2005, p. 105) Until 1960, 62 Orthodox monasteries from all over the country are dissolved, demolished, destroyed and transformed into Collective Farms, (Jinga, 2001-2002) representing one third of them. (Caravia, 1998, p. 14)

In order to submine the church and monachal elite and to impose a psychical regime of terror, priests and monks of high vocation and notoriety are arrested. (Daniil Sandu Tudor, Dumitru Stăniloae, Arsenie Boca, Antonie Plămădeală, etc.) Most of the arrests were made based on false evidence and testimonies, suggesting alleged legionary activities. (CNSAS, information fund, 2637 and 1015 files.)

Besides the permanent pressure of the Cults Ministers and other state organs, the Church also undertakes from the communist party a strong backstage pressure. Documents included in the Security Archives prove the existence of the orders to pursue the hierarchs<sup>6</sup>, pressure against the Patriarch for naming or dismissing certain inconvenient hierarchs, arrests of certain people close to him as an instrument of pressure<sup>7</sup>, etc. (Enache, 2005).

2398 priests belonging to all cults were identified as being imprisoned during the communist period. As coming out of the data, the hardest repression was undertaken by the Orthodox Church, with 1727 priests imprisoned out of the approximately 8500 of all the Orthodox clergy. (Annex, Chart 3) The data don't include the monks, also submitted to a strong repression (Caravia, 1998, p. 12).

According to statistics made after 1989, during the first twenty years of communism, on political reasons, they arrested, detained in prisons and camps, deported or displaced over two million people, meaning one in nine Romanians, 15% of those arrested ending up dead by shooting, torture or extermination in prisons or labour camps, meaning one in every six prisoners (AFSPR, 2004; RCPADCR, 2006, p. 161).

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<sup>5</sup> An information note from March 19<sup>th</sup> 1950, reproduces a comment of the Patriarch Justin Marina in a private discussion about the "concession" of not being dissolved made to the Romanian Orthodox Church: "The regime still needs the Church (...). It is aware that the Church is backed up by 12.000.000 believers, the party counting only some thousands of punks without importance" (ACNSAS, Documentary fund, 67 file, f. 211).

<sup>6</sup> It is, for example, the pressure exerted over the Leaders of the Church and the Patriarch Justinian by the Cults Minister, Stanciu Stoian, for the dismissal of the bishop Nicolae Popovici.

<sup>7</sup> The Internal Affairs Minister Draghici decided the arrest of Daniil Sandu Tudor, a close person to the Patriarch, and the whole group "Rugul Aprins" (The Burning Pyre) as a way of pressure over Patriarch Justinian, so that the Church accept the limitation of the monasteries possibility to recruit new members.

Vasile Voiculescu<sup>8</sup>, Radu Gyr<sup>9</sup>, Mircea Vulcănescu<sup>10</sup>, Anton Golopentia<sup>11</sup>, Mihail Manoilescu<sup>12</sup>, Corneliu Coposu<sup>13</sup>, Iuliu Hossu<sup>14</sup>, Richard Wurmbrand<sup>15</sup>, Elisabeta Rizea<sup>16</sup>, Gherasim Iscu<sup>17</sup>, Sofian Boghiu<sup>18</sup> are just some of the people that were imprisoned under communism.

Mid '60s, the political detention stops, the repression campaigns being replaced for the remaining three decades of communist regime by the information control and the encouraging of the delation. The Security receives in the collective mental the image of a huge leviathan that can enter the most intimate details of every day life. In early '60s, the Security forces count over 55,000 officers and soldiers, the numbers not including the informers network (Deletant, 2006).

### FORMS OF OPPONENCY TO THE COMMUNIST REGIME

Understanding the types and degree of opponency to the decisions, organization or existence of the communist regime is useful for defining the profile of Romanian elites and for making understandable their behaviour related to the important events we have selected for analysis.

The actions of opponency to the communist regime in Romania put on many forms, each one of them playing an important part in shaping distinct attitude and action groups, when communism collapsed, and in building the foundation of the post-communist regime.

The most significant are:

1. *the anti-communist resistance* in the country, with its four forms:

- armed resistance movements;
- resistance in detention;
- resistance in profession/culture/religion;
- passive, subversive resistance (inside the family, informal groups).

<sup>8</sup> Doctor, writer. Fulfills 4 years of detention and dies when going out of prison.

<sup>9</sup> Poet. Fulfills 16 years of detention. For his manifest-poem *Ridică-te, Gheorghe, ridică-te, Ioane* considered by the authorities as instigator against the communist regime, he receives the death penalty, later commuted to 25 years of forced labour.

<sup>10</sup> Philosopher, sociologist, writer and minister. He died in the prison of Aiud.

<sup>11</sup> Sociologist, statistician. He died in the Văcărești Penitentiary.

<sup>12</sup> Economist, former minister. He died in the prison of Sighet.

<sup>13</sup> Economist, jurist, leader of the National Peasant Party. He fulfills a 17 years detention penalty.

<sup>14</sup> Greek-Catholic bishop. He fulfilled 7 years of detention and then house arrest for 15 years until his death.

<sup>15</sup> Christian preacher. He fulfilled 14 years of detention.

<sup>16</sup> Peasant woman. She fulfilled 13 years of prison for helping the resistance army.

<sup>17</sup> Monk at the Tismana Monastery, arrested for helping the resistance movement. He dies in prison, one of his torturers confessing to him before the monk's death.

<sup>18</sup> Great Orthodox confessor. He fulfilled 6 years of jail.

2. *the actions of diaspora*, with three forms:
  - the extension abroad of the resistance cause;
  - sustaining the resistance and/or dissidence within the country;
  - the public contesting of the Romanian communist state.
3. *the dissidence*, with two forms:
  - civic and cultural dissidence;
  - political dissidence.

#### DISSIDENCE AND RESISTANCE. CONCEPTUAL SPECIFICATIONS

In the Romanian specialized literature, using the terms *resistance* and *dissidence* consists in great vagueness in terms. Many times, the resisters themselves self-identify as “dissidents”, and for that reason we considered some conceptual explanations to be useful.

From our material’s viewpoint, the *resistance* phenomenon designates the action of reluctance or subversion towards a political regime believed to be illegitimate, as an effect of an occupation operation. The contesting (frontal or silent) takes place *from exterior, from outside* the system, by communities, groups, people that don’t fulfill any jobs of decision, control or prestige inside the contested regime and don’t benefit from the privileges offered by it. Also, they contest the very foundation of the system, *the resistance* overcoming the level of the movements in social discontent concerning the behaviour of some leaders or certain policies or government programs.

The dissidence phenomenon designates a contestation *from the inside*, by groups and people belonging to the political system or the related institutions (Dimisianu, 2007) and that make public their contesting positions, without leaving the system for that. The dissidence means formulating a “*separate opinion, but not totally opposite*” (Simuț, 2008), means partial ideological divergence, a critique position towards certain components of the political system or some people and their views on this government, but not against the system itself.

Often used in an inappropriate manner, in the accepted meaning of contestation of a political regime, the term *dissidence* comes to indicate cases and situations that fundamentally differ ones from the others. A gesture based on deeply anti-communist values, such as the one of Corneliu Coposu, a former political prisoner, leader of the peasant line in the interwar period, who with the risk of being arrested reactivates in early ‘80s the National Peasants Party and affiliates it in 1979 to the Cristian Democratic International (Ștefănescu, 1995, p. 44) cannot be placed, in our point of view, in the same category with the action of the avantgarde poet Miron Radu Paraschivescu, a communist in the illegalist period (1933), who, disavowing the attitude of the new party leaders towards the old members, retires from the party in 1969, as a protest, stating that “*the abolition of this formality won’t stop me remain, as*

*I was before, what is called a communist without a party*” (Dimisianu, 2007). The moral gesture of not acknowledging the fundamentals of the communist political order can't be methodologically linked with the action of contesting a political group that represents the government. Also, the human types, as their trajectories, are different: at one side we have the leader of a party that was abolished by the communists, politically imprisoned for 17 years, and who after his release – although with a superior background (journalist – economist) – stays a simple unqualified worker until the collapse of the communist regime; on the other we have a writer approved by the regime, one of the leaders of the Writers Union and whose writings are published in huge edition numbers in a time when important names of literature were banned.

The Coposu case is, in the acceptance of our study, an act of obvious *resistance*, while Miron Radu Paraschivescu is a clear case of *dissidence*. A significant part of the most known acts of public contesting the regime are not pure types, like these two, but mixtures in various degrees between dissidence and resistance, and therefore we have assigned the space for this clarification in subchapter 3. *Dissidence* (go to *infra*). We excluded from the chapter dedicated to the resistance the discussion about situating the particular cases in one category or the other, because, unlike the dissidence which is a phenomenon of singularities, the resistance is a collective phenomenon, its historical effect being given by the resultant of all the individual particular actions of political and ideological opposition.

#### 1. THE ANTI-COMMUNIST RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

The actions of resistance against the communism started in Romania right after the country's surrender and the signing of the truce with the USSR in September 12<sup>th</sup> 1944, the moment when the Romanian state entered the Soviet influence, and they lasted more than a decade (1944-1962). The resistance was firstly shaped as a civilian insubordination, as well as armed confrontation (Ilinca, Bejenariu, 2003, p. 140).

The anti-communist resistance covered the whole country<sup>19</sup> and had an obvious national character, its goal being the abolishing of the political regime imposed by the Soviets in Romania (Țăranu, Bărbulescu, 2006, p. 12). The movement, in its most active cores, was marked by the preponderance of peasants (Enache, 2005, pp. 498-506), but resistance groups spontaneously appear in all the segments of society: the forming of partisan blocks, consisting of peasants and

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<sup>19</sup> Between 1950–1951, in the records of the 314 Bureau of the Internal Affairs Ministry there are mentioned 39 resistance cores (called “gangs” in the document), from which 29 were annihilated, 15 armed groups still functioning “in various mountain regions of the country”. The same document mentions the putting on register to be arrested for 982 isolated “fugitives” (ACNSAS, Documentary fund, 36 file, f. 240 apud Țăranu, Bărbulescu, 2006, p. 13).

soldiers, the students actions (1947, 1948, 1952<sup>20</sup>), the workers' (1953<sup>21</sup>), the groups of women' (1953<sup>22</sup>) etc. (Popescu, 1997).

In the same time with the armed resistance, groups of cultural and religious resistance are formed. The clerical movement "Rugul Aprins (The Burning Pyre)" from the Antim Monastery in Bucharest (1944–1948) is an example of this kind (Enache, 2005).

In a document from the political Archives of the Federal Foreign Policy Ministry in Bonn, dated April 1953, the explanation for the spontaneity of resistance in Romania is searched within the anti-communism of Romanian population (apud Popescu, 1997). The anti-communism as a community attitude was developed because of the influence of the peasants enrolled in the army, confronted with the communist experience in 1917 in Moldova, on the occasion of the Bolshevik revolution, when the Russian units were disarmed, and in 1919 in Hungary when the Bela Kun regime was abolished. The loss of two Romanian provinces, Basarabia and North Bucovina, added to the hostile fund against the Soviet Union already existent in the country (Popescu, 1997).

The political reprisals started by the communists, the religious and cultural constraints and the social and economical reforms added to the confidence in the Western intervention (especially American) against the country becoming Bolshevik (Banu, 2002). After the communist state intervention in force, in 1948, as a result of the arrests, the remaining resistance groups became refugee in the mountain areas of the country, harder to access by the repression police. (Țăranu, Bărbulescu, 2006, p. 14) Part of the anti-communist resistance organisations were hosted in churches, monasteries or hermitages throughout the country, mostly in places that had favourable geographical positioning (Jinga, 2001-2002; Enache, 2005, p. 105). The maximum point of the resistance movements was reached in 1949–1950, once the process of collectivization<sup>23</sup> began, when the Romanian reservists builded military units and special Romanian battalions, and the

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<sup>20</sup> Also encouraged by similar movements in Hungary (October 1956), in many Romanian universities and even in some highschoools they start the actions of protest during the Political and Russian courses, requesting the removal of politics and ideologisation from the education system. In October and November many student cores that planned the organisation of students demonstrations of protest were repressed. In Timisoara, in late October 1956, over 2000 students were arrested. The students' demonstration programmed to take place in the University Square in Bucharest on November 5<sup>th</sup> was forbidden by police and army forces who blocked the square (Covaci, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> The most significant of these is the protest movement of the rail cars factory *Grivița Roșie* in early June 1953 (Popescu, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> In 1953 there were many clashes with the state militia in front of the food stores. One of the most violent was on June 14<sup>th</sup>, when a group of women protested because of the lack of some basic products. Fearing of spontaneous movements of this type, the state takes the measure of introducing armed posts in all the state stores in the countryside (Popescu, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> According to the data from The International Center of Studies over Communism, made public within the Memorial of the Resistance and Victims of Communism, between 1949-1962 took place over one hundred spontaneous revolts against collectivization.



communist state was forced to form, at district level, special units to fight the partisans (Popescu, 1997).

The collaboration of political figures with the communists, the loss of contact of resistance groups inside the country with the diaspora and other internal groups, the actions of repression, together with the more obvious shaping of the fact that the Western powers won't intervene (Popescu, 1997) led to the end of the active resistance movements and to the entering of the Romanian community in a phase of passive resistance.

The public reaction movements come back, under a social form, once the miners strikes of Jiu Valley in 1977 and the workers' in Brasov, 1987 (Săndulescu, 1996, p. 13). As pointed out in the finale of the document from the political Archives of the Federal Foreign Policy Ministry in Bonn, quoted earlier, "*the world of resistance becomes a world itself, with organs, institutions, laws and possibilities of its own. It is not a safe life, but full of danger, yet still possible until the last await, the fight that will decide the final eliberation*" (apud Popescu, 1997).

An important role in bonding the passive resistance spirit was played by the former political prisoners, in the majority of the Romanian families being at least one member as victim of the repression. According to the database from the Labour Ministry (DL 118/990) over 100,000 of the former political prisoners were still alive after 1990, representing the category of young people arrested at the age of 17-24 or those arrested after 1959–1960, the mass of those imprisoned by the communist regime being already dead before 1990. (AFDPR, 2004) With rare exceptions, the great cultural and spiritual personalities that were detained for political reasons were denied the social reintegration after being released. Many of them gather disciples and adherents groups, such being the case of Petre Țutea<sup>24</sup> or Constantin Noica<sup>25</sup>, the most known by the references of their discipols that were part of the post-December public life (Munteanu, 1992; Liiceanu, 1991).

After the end of the armed resistance, the Romanian community diffuses the resistance in millions of small sabotages against the regime, exerting a silent pressure for restoring the normality values<sup>26</sup>. Every sector of the social life brings out personalities that through their work and creation re-establish a natural continuity of the Romanian cultural fund (in books as well as folklore) and that defend the values contested in the first decades of communism, by trying to put them back into the circulation, although their huge majority remained unknown (Simut, 2008). We recall as an example some of these cultural restorations with some degree of notoriety: the 45 years of translating the *Filocalia* (in eleven

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<sup>24</sup> Petre Țutea fulfilled a punishment of 13 years of prison and forced labour, 1948–1953, 1956–1964.

<sup>25</sup> Constantin Noica was detained for 6 years (1958–1964), and between 1949–1958 he was house arrested in Campulung-Muscel.

<sup>26</sup> Considering this collective behaviour and the long row of occupation regimes Romania has gone through, the Romanian philosopher Petre Țutea, when asked what type of political regime would be better for the Romanian people, he answered: "the one that can get to become old".

volumes) by Dumitru Stăniloae and its integral publishing between 1946–1980, the editorial work initiated by Perpessicius (Dumitru S. Panaitescu) and continued by D. Vatamaniuc, Al. Oprea, P. Creția, etc. and then the publishing of Mihai Eminescu's *Complete Works* (fifteen volumes of the whole seventeen were published before 1989), the starting of the cultural program *The National Collection of Folklore* (in 1969) on the initiative of the folklorist Mihai Pop, etc.

When talking about the resistance through culture, writer Aurel Dragos Munteanu, former UN ambassador of Romania after the collapse of communism wrote: *“The resistance through culture, often mocked, was real and was practiced by people of great quality, but who were not suited from heroic fabric, but from scholar one. In the ‘50s, when the party had a propaganda interest in showing generosity, many of the Russian classics were translated together with an academical collection of Greek and Latin authors. And with the later series, published under the supervision of Idel Segal at the Scientific and Encyclopedical Publishing House, the Romanian reader has at hand today a corpus of classic thinking that can form on its bases the great characters of tomorrow. He was yet produced under the conditions of a bitter and anti-cultural communism by demure and patient people, which felt the regime like salt in their eyes. In Tolstoy’s Childhood, the young Romanian read about The Mad Grisha and his unending prayer. It was the prayer of Jesus in the isihast practice, in the tradition of the monks from the hermitages of Moldova, if you could understand what it was about”* (Munteanu, 2006).

Despite the tough measures of surveillance, during all the communist period, banned books travelled clandestine, distributed from “hand to hand”, a true sabotage of ideology and cultural constraints. The regime feels obligated from 1965 to loosen the censorship filter, so a significant part of the banned books begin to be published. In the same time, new books appear, books that severely scan the communist system and its practices, proposing themes that were impossible to imagine in the decades before (*The Suffering of the Descendants*, by Ion Lancranjan, *The Most Beloved of Earthlings*, by Marin Preda, etc.).

Although obviously lacking the power to shake the regime, the protest gestures or the ones that contested the regime, reaching public sight by chance or by hazard, even if some of them don't precisely request the dissolution of communism and stay in the dissidence area, contributed, along with the others, to the empowering of the silent resistance of millions of people (Paul Goma, Radu Filipescu, Doina Cornea, etc.)

Developing the instinct of “underground fight”, maintaining the anti-communist attitude inside families and close people groups, the spontaneous sabotage of the communist regime in many forms, present in all the social layers and categories, the lack of sustain and trust for the regime, all these represent the community affective context in which the mass movements of December 1989 and April-May 1990 can be understood, movements that led to the changing of the political regime in Romania. Far from being just some manifestations of discontent against the Ceaușescu regime, they endorsed the nature of the communist regime and erupted spontaneously in the political context of this system's international sustaining collapse (Săndulescu, 1996, p. 63).

Although the groups' tendency that took over the power in '89 was reformant socialist, *Perestroika-like*, under the pressure of the people, the communist party will be abolished through a state decree, the population dissolving its structures with such rapidity that states the power of its *resistance*<sup>27</sup>. When speaking about this fact, Petre Țuțea caught out with a deep metaphor the situation of the communism in Romania, that "*slipped (over the Romanian people – n.n.) like water slipping over fishes*" (Țuțea, 1992, p. 318).

## 2. THE ROMANIAN EXILE

On the pattern of other European countries, in early 1943, under the pressure of the Soviet threat, appears the idea of organising a Romanian leadership in exile, the Foreign Policy Minister of Romania making lists of people that, in a case of instauring the communism, would refugiate in the West to sustain the anti-communist resistance. The idea spread later, so many such groups were formed in the democratic Western countries, organised around personalities mandated for this by political leaders from the country (Djuvara, 2008). The number of such initiatives reaches a maximum after the political parties were outlawed (1947), being even said to build an exile government project (Calafeteanu, 2000). The idea was discouraged by the State Department of USA, as emerging from a conversation between Grigore Gafencu, Brutus Coste – former Romanian diplomats – and Horace Nickels, public worker for Romanian issues (Hoover Institution Archives, Brutus Coste fund, p. 1).

Nor they could assemble a coordination core that would unify the tendencies of the Romanian emigration, the political agenda and directions being much too etherogenes (Calafeteanu, 2000). But the idea led to appear many such initiatives, such as, for example, the *National Romanian Committee* (CNR), set up in 1949 and patronized by the King Michael I, established in Switzerland in 1947, or the *Free Romanians League*, set up in 1960 as an alternative to it. The organisations stop functioning in the '70s, after an administrative decision of the Americans, the main financers, to stop giving money for captive nations' committees (Calafeteanu, 2000).

Some of the people that were repatriated after 1989 politically speculated the information vacuum of the Romanians inside the country in order to present some actions and organisations as exile governments and to legitimate attitudes or political figures. The idea of exile government also fed the monarchist attachments, as an important part of the organisations in diaspora militated for reinstauring the constitutional monarchy in post-December Romania.

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<sup>27</sup> In 24 hours (between December 21–22, 1989) they abolished the whole institutional structure of a state, there was no inertial period, as it would be natural when institutions are embraced in a real way.

An important component of the Romanian exile is represented (not by hazard!) by the writers, over 250 of them leaving the country before and during the communist regime, after some evaluations the percent surpassing the ones from any other former communist country in Europe (Ulici, 1994). The greatest part of them founded organisations and magazines in the West, building true cultural networks, a steady and strong contact being formed between the personalities in the country (Alexandru Paleologu, Ioan Alexandru, Marin Preda, Vasile Voiculescu<sup>28</sup>, etc.) and the diaspora (Behring, 2001, p. 47).

There are several waves of emigration, each one distinguished by the professional, social and political track and by the exile activity<sup>29</sup>.

In 1944, a significant part of the political and intellectual figures already abroad, working in foreign diplomatical services, mainly having the visions of right, didn't come back in the country, discouraged by the concerning political situation and the threat of possible arrest. It is the case of Mircea Eliade, Vintilă Horia, Grigore Gafencu etc. (Behring, 2001, pp. 24-28). Some remained abroad by their own decision, others were mandated by the political class in Romania to prolong the cause of Romanian resistance in the West.

Another group, that of intellectuals from the modern left area, that initially got involved in the political or cultural communist life, leave the country between 1946–1949, disapproving the Stalinist formula imposed by the Soviets in Romania. Among them, Virgil Ierunca, Monica Lovinescu, Stefan Baciu etc. (Behring, 2001, p. 30-32)

Late '60s, taking advantage of the repression's relaxation and the relative opening of the country towards the West, due to Ceausescu's refusal to participate to the occupation of Czechoslovakia along with the other countries part of the Warsaw Pact, some of the former political prisoners, released in 1962-1964, request political asylum in the West (the case of Ioan Ioanid). The majority of them stay in the country, giving credit to Ceausescu's regime, as well as many social or professional categories, and having faith in a lasting liberation of the country. Later disappointed, in late '70s, part of them leaves the country or, as the case of Paul Goma who chose the way of expressing in public these complaints, they are expelled (Behring, 2001, p. 37). The

<sup>28</sup> V. Voiculescu sends abroad for publishing the poem *Adio libertății* (Good-bye to freedom) to the diaspora magazine "Lucașfăru", where it appears under the surname Valeriu Anghel in number 2 from May 1949. "Călcată țara ca un teasc cu struguri/ Stă sub copita vremilor de-apoi./ Cu miile, când n-avem grâu, sub pluguri/ Ne-ngroapă și ne samănă pe noi./ Pe regi ni-i azvârliră la gunoi./ Din pânțele ni-s pruncii puși la juguri./ Strămoșii șterși ca basme cu strigoi. [...]Tu, glorie a vieții, tu ne ții!/ Să-ți spun adio ție? Niciodată!/ Chiar de-o fi scris să nu mai fim noi vii, / De dincolo de moarte scăpărată./ Tunând peste tirani, tot ai să vii!" (V. Voiculescu, *Opere*, Ed. Cartex, 2004, pp. 665-666)

<sup>29</sup> As a mention linked to the identity profile, we specify that a part of the cultural world in the Romanian exile, especially writers, continued to write in Romanian and to address exclusively to the Romanian public (Paul Goma, Ion Caraion etc.), another part adopting a double cultural belonging, bilingual and focused on Romanian readers as well as the ones from the host country (Mircea Eliade, Eugen Ionescu, but also Monica Lovinescu, Virgil Ierunca etc.) or detaching from their original identity (Emil Cioran etc.) (Behring, 2001, pp. 74-75).

largest wave of political emigration takes place in the last decade of the regime, over the background of hardening the control, lowering life standards and enforcing propaganda. The most part of the emigrants enclose to the culture actions and groups initiated in the West by the former emigrants of modern left (Behring, 2001, pp. 42-44).

As cultural and ideological organizations and actions start to evolve, those initiated in the '50s by the Congress of the United States against the communist regimes in the East (Popper, 1992), a significant part of the Romanian diaspora curdles around the departments regarding Romanian issues, developing inside *Radio Free Europe*, *The Voice of America*, *BBC*, etc. forms of public expression alternative to the official speech in the country. In the last years (the hardest) of the Ceausescu regime, Radio Free Europe becomes the most significant tribune for dissident attitudes in the country, also being a promoting filter and not few times a discriminatory one<sup>30</sup>. During the Events of December 1989, the credibility and notoriety built through Radio Free Europe were of great significance in imposing some people in the political life. Also, a great part of the writers, opinion builders or members of the post-December civil society are later legitimated through their appartenance to the Radio Free Europe movement, either through direct participation or their relation with editors or external collaborators of the radio.

After the collapse of the communist regime, instead of a natural restoration of unity, especially in the literary and civical world, the cultural and resistance accomplishments of diaspora are presented – especially by the modern left intellectuals – as an alternative to those developed inside the country, whose value is minimised and made to be derisory. Tagging the internal Romanian resistance forms as compromised through the cohabitation with the communism, magazines and publishing houses<sup>31</sup> appear and publish almost exclusively the work of writers from diaspora and of those inside the country but legitimated as familiar to those. With small concessions made to some groups that asserted culturally in Romania, but still placed under the influence of the cultural phenomenon in exile, the livresque and artificial separation that operates in the public space between the two cores of Romanian culture under communism becomes a source of identity segregation and justification for exclusiveness, censorship, abuse or defamation campaigns.

### 3. THE DISSIDENCE

Referred to the amplitude, intensity and efficiency of the *resistance* phenomenon, the *dissidence* phenomenon in Romania is insignificant. It is insignificant in number, related to the more than four decades of communism, as

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<sup>30</sup> Like any other press organ, Radio Free Europe practiced a selection of information, positions and characters that were meant to be promoted on air. There are a series of significant events of opposing the decisions of the communist regime that were not promoted, despite of others less important in consequences. An example is the meeting in Vatican between Patriarch Teoctist and Pope John Paul II in January 1989.

<sup>31</sup> Humanitas, Jurnalul literar, Europolis, Apostrof, Polirom, Institutul European, etc.

well as in consequences<sup>32</sup>, not being a determinant cause for the collapse of the country's communist regime (Dimisianu, 2007). The Romanian dissidence was more a media built phenomenon than a social one.

After the end of the armed resistance cores, inside the Romanian society (as well as in Poland) organised forms of public contesting (undisguised) develop against the politics, the most important social layer that could generate this type of opponency, the intellectuals, being "deeply disrupted and oriented to conflict within" (Stoenescu, II, 2004, p. 746) The existing actions of political contesting shaped an individual, isolated, symbolical and not operational form, without the power to generate or awaken a mass reaction.

These individual actions of public contesting are very different from the values that determine them and they subordinate to their finality. (They don't all belong to the *dissidence* phenomenon.) According to these criteria we can identify four major types:

- a). *anti-communist opposition*, directed against the fundamentals of the communist regime;
- b). *anti-government opposition*, directed against the political group that has the power, as well as their policies;
- c). *civic dissidence*, seeking the improvement of the regime through claims: civic, social, cultural etc.
- d). *political dissidence*, seeking the improvement, the 'reformation' of the party's organisation.

#### A. ANTI-COMMUNISM, ANTI-CEAUȘESCU ACTIONS AND CIVIC DISSIDENCE

After '60, Romania doesn't know until December 1989 other public actions and positions that explicitly endorse the discard of the communist regime. The analysis of the cases known and shown in the media, cases of public contesting between '60-'80, indicate a predominant phenomenon of civic dissidence materialized through texts made public by *Radio Free Europe* or foreign press. The contesting is mostly directed against the Ceausescu regime and less aiming the fundamentals of the communist system.

The undisguised actions against the communist system, noticeably less than the first two decades, remain concentrated almost integrally on the social areas completely lacking instruments of public intervention (access to press, to extended network systems of foreign contacts). They are made, as a form of protest or in extreme situations, by peasants, students, former political prisoners, people from families with anti-communist background, whose social and professional integration was blocked either by the party or by themselves by rejecting a carrier conditioned by political concessions. These acts are very rarely and absolutely accidentally taken in the media circuit, internally or by the diaspora, remaining, as most of the resistance acts, in the area of anonymity. (The case of Corneliu

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<sup>32</sup> The majority of the dissident cases (Doina Cornea, Dan Petrescu, etc.) were evaluated in the files made by the Security as "insignificant for the state's safety" (Stoenescu I, 2004, pp. 212, 219).

Coposu, presented in the earlier pages, became just later a public one, and is such an example.)

Belonging to a superior social and professional category, that contains the advantage of acces to prodigious institutions, legitimation and tribunes to spread a message, determines the nuance of the protest, its setting under the protection of legal tools and of the dominant ideology, therefore the intellectual's tendency towards *dissidence* and not radical opponyency. Romania is not an exception from this pattern, the dissidence being mostly a phenomenon concentrated in the literary, academic and cultural environment.

If in the case of anti-communist opposition – as well as political dissidence – the things are relatively clear, the action coming from social areas with precise profile. In the cases of civic dissidence and of government opposition we deal with an area of complex superpositions and interferences of the first two<sup>33</sup>. Part of the *known* dissidents biographies indicate carriers under the protection of some Nomenklatura members<sup>34</sup> or sheltered by political institutions of the communist regime<sup>35</sup>. The biographies of other Romanian dissidents indicate the accomplishment of scholarship stages in West<sup>36</sup> in a time when the “steel curtain” manifested a more than restrictive attitude on the matter, and part of the civic or cultural dissidents come directly from the Nomenklatura area<sup>37</sup>.

The “civic dissidence” phenomenon usually appears in social groups that enjoyed their lifestyles (material<sup>38</sup>, professional, civil rights<sup>39</sup>, etc.) way better than the average of the Romanian community.

<sup>33</sup> For this reason it was made possible to associate in government in 1990 some well known civic dissidents such as Andrei Plesu, Mircea Dinescu, Ana Blandiana, etc. with political dissidents such as Ion Iliescu, Virgil Magureanu, Alexandru Barladeanu, Silviu Brucan, etc.

<sup>34</sup> For example, the case of Ana Blandiana, protected by Gheorghe Radulescu, former Minister for several ministries between 1949-1979 and member of the CC of PCR from 1969.

<sup>35</sup> Such as the example of Mircea Dinescu, a graduate of the “Ștefan Gheorghiu”, Social-Political Sciences Academy the university of the communist party created to instruct its personnel, then secretary of the party's youth organisation (UTC) within the Writers Union (Ștefănescu, 2005b, p. 841).

<sup>36</sup> For example, the case of Dorin Tudoran, who accomplished scholarship stages in France and GFR in 1979, 1980, 1981.

<sup>37</sup> Such as the case of Nicolae Breban, a substitute member of the Central Comitee of the PCR and a leader of the Writers Union until his dissidence moment in 1971. (Although he criticizes the political leadership directions through interviews for the Western press and he announces, as a protest, his resignation from the position of chief-editor of the Writers Union magazine, *Romania Literară* (The Literary Romania), he doesn't actually resign from the political functions; his biography records that he finds out about his expelling from the CC of PCR after two months, when returning from a trip abroad.)

<sup>38</sup> In Romania during the communist regime, wirters for example were payed for their intellectual ownership rights according to the number of books published and not of those sold. The numbers of books printed in the majour printing houses (*Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă* – The State Printing House for Literature and Arts, *Editura Cartea Rusă* – The Russian Book Printing House, *Biblioteca pentru toți* - The Library for Everyone, *Cartea Românească* – The Romanian Book, *Editura Eminescu* – The Eminescu Printing House, *Editura Ion Creangă* – The Ion Creangă Printing House, *Editura politică* – The Political Printing House, etc.) were usually substantial, the books being distributed not only in book stores but also in libraries (under the state control; throughout the country there were over 16,500 libraries, to which we should add other several tens of thousands Cultural Centers and Cultural Establishments).

As in all the communist block, the dissidence is a phenomenon of the '60s-'80s, emerging in Romania in a time when the communist state – a member of the UN – that had diplomatical and commercial relations with most of the Western countries and collaborated with them in international actions (Stoenescu, 2004, II, p. 15), wanted to be evaluated as favourable as possible by the Helsinki Watch (1978) and other Western monitoring forums, in order to tighten the link with the West.

With rare exceptions (Radu Filipescu<sup>40</sup>, Dumitru Iuga<sup>41</sup>, Ion Puiu<sup>42</sup>, etc) – who ended up receiving prison convictions – most of the dissidence acts, that enjoyed and enjoy even now the notoriety, were attempted by people who benefited from social or political mechanisms of protection. Most of the known dissidents benefited, even before the dissident act was even consumed, from the certitude of acces to the public voice of the Radio Free Europe or other ways of spreading their message to the West (Doina Cornea, Dan Desliu, Dan Petrescu, Mircea Dinescu, Dorin Tudoran, etc.)

The anti-communist opposition, as the anti-Ceaușescu one, was militating underground. The risk assumed by Radu Filipescu (who in 1982 – 1983 distributes manifests in mail boxes of Bucharest's buidings, in which he calls the citizens to a street riot against Ceaușescu) cannot be compared with that of some Mircea Dinescu, who criticized the Ceaușescu regime in the communist paper *Libération (Cartea Albă a Securității)*, note 474, pp. 426-429).

The civic dissidence – like the political one – adopts legal ways to dispute with the politics decisions, referring in the public speech to the constitutional and reglementation stipulations or internal laws, to the power's statements or international agreements that the state committed to. The protest of Paul Goma, for example, addressed in a public letter to the participants of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in February 1977, comes from this premise of legitimacy: *"The rights granted by internal laws and international conventions, ratified by the governments of the totalitary states, are not being respected"* (Goma, 2005).

The acces to ways of spreading the message in Western media is an instrument of protection for the dissident, a protection that a normal person lacks in

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<sup>39</sup> The cultural environments had the liberty to actually travel in the West, had acces to the cultural international community, could publish outside borders, etc. Many names of the dissidence received significant awards given by the Western world (for example, Ana Blandiana, The Herder Award, 1988)

<sup>40</sup> Young engineer. Convicted to 10 years of prison for actions against the socialist order.

<sup>41</sup> Technician at the Romanian Television, who organizes in 1983, together with other six young people, an association that militated for the country's political and economical opening. He was convicted to 10 years of detention.

<sup>42</sup> Engineer, former political prisoner and member of the National Peasants Party, who wanted to run for the Great National Assembly in the elections in 1985, reason to be arrested and imprisoned several times (Niculescu, 2002).



similar situations. For many of the dissidents, in order to infirm their critique to the West, the regime offers them advantages from which the rest of the people are more than deprived. For example, in a country where the right to free circulation is extremely restrictive and could be arbitrarily refused, and where to the majority of the citizens – that implied no threat for the Security – this right was denied, most of the known dissidents received very easily visas to travel outside Romania (Stoenescu, II, 2004, p. 147).

After '89, many of the “dissident” writers, by taking their case outside the communist state context, exaggerated the effects of the persecution they endured. If in the '50s Radu Gyr was convicted to death for a poem<sup>43</sup> (Simut, 2008), in the '80s Ana Blandiana, Mircea Dinescu, etc. who don't always receive a favourable referral for being published, are still free and continue to be members of the Writers Union. Their professional right is not restricted, and their writings are later even published in significant number of copies<sup>44</sup>. In a similar way, the pursuit as a form of intimidation and the enquiry in various excuses were often presented as being a legitimation of the importance for some acts of dissidence. But these forms of pressure were part of the current communist state practices and were applied without discrimination to all its citizens.

In Romania there wasn't an “*emblematic figure of dissidence*” on the pattern of Havel, Bukovski or Michnik, the perception of the dissidents being “*only internal, intermediated by the Radio Free Europe. Only Paul Goma stayed for a while, but not for long, in the attention of international press, especially after Eugen Ionescu spoke about him*” (Dimisianu, 2007).

After 1989, Romania faces an action of masking and embellishing the dissidence in the media and presenting it disproportionally to its real amplitude and impact over the Romanian society under communism. Beyond the utility of this process for legitimating some public figures in post-December life, the political and media campaign for this hyperbolic dissidence is also the result of an identity frustration, of an inferiority complex of one part of Romania's intellectuals, generated by the fact that “*the canonic pattern of anti-communist resistance with credentials in Poland or the Czech Republic is not found in our case*” (Enache, 2005, p. 449).

An article in the cultural press in Romania briefly reflects this attitude: “*Paul Goma saved back then Romania's honour, enrolling it on an already well contoured map of interior opposition movements from the other Eastern countries. (The author then specifies the dissidence acts internationally known) (...) Out of all this prestigious series, Romania was missing. Already more isolated than other Easterns,*

<sup>43</sup> *Ridică-te, Gheorghe, ridică-te, Ioane!*, a poem about Romanian resistance.

<sup>44</sup> Ana Blandiana, for example, after the interdiction of signature in 1984 of some poems that were to appear in the *Amfiteatru* magazine, published at least four volumes of poetry: *Pray Star – Stea de pradă* (1986); *Other Occurrences in My Garden – Alte întâmplări din grădina mea* (1987); *Occurrences on My Street – Întâmplări de pe strada mea* (1988); *Poems – Poezii* (1988).

*we risked disappearing from the world's conscience. Nothing was happening in Romania. Romania was drawn out of the circuit. (...) It was a sort of forgotten land, unknown, the kind the antiques, on their papers, wrote hic sunt leones, because they had no news"* (Niculescu, 2002).

And in Romania *something* had happened, but totally *something else*: two million political prisoners, half a million dead, two decades of armed resistance and another two decades of passive resistance in professions, culture, religion, family. In a protest-article against the mystification of the real impact of the resistance and dissidence phenomena in the History of Communism high-school textbook, Romanian language teacher from Bacău, Ioan Neacșu, catches out a relevant aspect of this issue in cause: *"You could very well be polite, even nice to the Security agent that was tracking you, but [it was much harder] to realize the "silent resistance" that meant for the peasant not going to work at the "collective", for the labourer just to pretend that he's working, following the principle that "they pretend to pay us, we pretend to work", for the intellectual to outline, through works of art, through his didactic activity, through everything he did, the absurdity of dictatorship. The poems published by Ana Blandiana in the Amfiteatru magazine, then the famous Arpagic<sup>45</sup>, the attitude of madam Doina Cornea – and we can give thousands of examples – are rain drops in the river that will sweep the dictatorship in 1989"* (Neacșu, 2009).

As well as in the case of the blight produced by the absence of *"the canonically model of anti-communist resistance established in Poland or Czech Republic"*, the survival formula followed by the Romanian Orthodox Church disappointed a part of the intellectuals that would demand from the Church public actions with political meanings in Romania, similar to those made by the Catholic Church. As a significant fact in this direction, on January 18<sup>th</sup> 1990, three weeks after the Revolution of December, a group of 138 intellectuals, theologian teachers and priests, under the aegis of *the Group for Social Dialogue*, the main organization of the civic dissidence after 1989, publically demanded the Patriarch Teoctist to lay down the leadership of the Church, blaming him of political conformism. As a result of those noisy disproofs, even though totally insignificant in numbers compared with the total number of Romanian intellectuals and priests, the Patriarch Teoctist announces his retirement from the head of the Patriarchy for medical reasons. (Ștefănescu, 1995, p. 47) His retirement determines a big consternation in the monachal life, important spiritual leaders of the Romanian monks (Ilie Cleopa and others) starting an ample movement in the Church for reinstatement of Teoctist as a Patriarch. Crushing by prestige and public sustain the disproving voices, the confessors and the Church Synod organize on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1990, the come-back ceremony for the Patriarch on the Patriarchial throne (Ștefănescu, 1995, p. 59).

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<sup>45</sup> Pamphlet addressed to N. Ceaușescu's personal dictatorship, masked under the form of poetry for children. *Arpagic* ment the name of a cat, character that impersonated Ceaușescu.

*B. POLITICAL DISSIDENCE AND THE ANTI-CEAUȘESCU ACTIONS*

In Romania, talking about political dissidence inside the communist party has sense only regarding the Nomenklatura.

The communist state policy after '60 has been one of transforming the party into a mass organization. In 1989, the party reached the huge number of 3,800,000 members, meaning 22% of the country's adult population (twice than the percent of the party members in USSR, for example) losing its character of political organization and becoming a huge hierarchical social mechanism of social interdependence.

We find a successful portrait of the common members of the communist party, in the context of that social situation, in a text of the writer Aurel Dragos Munteanu: *"The mass of members [...] consisted of people who were forced to join the party for reasons imposed by the regime's rigor. As the Romanian society was built during Ceausescu, if you wanted to work at a newspaper you had to be a party member, if you wanted a master's degree you needed the recommendation of the party committee, for having any leading position in an enterprise you had to join the party, and so on. Of course the common person would prefer an absolutely formal concession rather than a relative social marginalization. People's professional and social aspirations should be understood in their dynamics. Starting the middle '60s, a new generation of Romanians joins the public life. They were dreaming for a decent life and a minimum prosperity, in the given conditions. The only political regime they knew was the communist one. It didn't matter anymore the fact that the party persecuted their parents, that it was the same dark gang, it was important that now the possibilities for professional and social accomplishments were created. The human nature is the same all over the world, people wish to be respected in the society, to obtain public honours and to achieve material prosperity. The criteria for reaching these goals have minimum variation, but they are essentially the same, in different countries and even in different social and political systems. No matter how oppressive a social and political system is, it cannot stop a certain normalizing of life. People still lived their lives in communism, they loved, dreamed to reach a goal and to give sense to their lives, with or without fear, but without thinking all the time at the party's policy and Ceausescu's stammering"* (Munteanu, 2006).

The same description of the internal social and political situation we find at Ion Rațiu, a significant name of the Romanian diaspora and member of the National Peasants Party: *"The party has today 3.8 million members, but few of them believe in the communism. They joined (the party) because the quality of being a party member is the only way for a grantable life – for example, for obtaining a higher university title. Ceausescu, his family and his gang really represent a mafia. All the power comes from the Godfather. This leading gang hardly has 250,000 people, at best"* (apud Milin, 1999, p. 185).

The communist party was calling the approximate 250,000 activist and superior levels – *Nomenklatura*, positioned by the political power in the key positions of the social and political macro-structure, the system's logic making their approval and decision to be indispensable for the functioning of every organised activity in the country.

In the history of the communist regime until the start of Perestroika (1988), there are recorded inside the communist party very few cases of insubordination towards Nicolae Ceaușescu – the most significant being, without doubt, the speech of Constantin Pârvolescu, founding member of the Romanian Communist Party, which during the XII<sup>th</sup> Congress of PCR (1979) declares to be against the re-election of Nicolae Ceaușescu as head of the party<sup>46</sup> – and not one case of official denial of communism.

Even though the dissidence acts were lacking major consequences – „*dissidents*” like Ion Iliescu<sup>47</sup> or Silviu Brucan<sup>48</sup> were just isolated, the party making sure to keep them in the *Nomenklatura*, for perpetuating their privileges” (Neacșu, 2009) – they are, at the level of state apparatus, totally desultory and without strength.

“The dissidence” of the system's inferior levels was, also, minor, determined by personal hostilities produced by political relegations<sup>49</sup>, by the place occupied in the system, rather than by the will of changing the system<sup>50</sup> (Stoenescu, 2004, p. 102).

One year before the start of the revolution in Romania, the leadership of USSR makes public the intention of transforming the political system<sup>51</sup>, sending a strong sign

<sup>46</sup> C. Pârvolescu accuses N. Ceaușescu of abuse and lack of responsibility towards the party's and country's problems. Also, he reproaches the Congress that it's neglecting the real problems, being busy with glorifying Ceaușescu.

<sup>47</sup> During his “marginalization” (1979–1989), Ion Iliescu receives the lead of some important institutions: National Council for Water and, after that, the Technical Publishing House.

<sup>48</sup> “Marginalized” since the '60s, Silviu Brucan was Romania's Minister in USA (1955) and UN (1956–1962). Despite the fact that he didn't finish university studies (Țuțea, 1992, 110) he becomes teacher of *scientific socialism* at the Medicine Faculty of Bucharest. Although he publishes in the Western press some critics regarding the Ceaușescu regime (on the occasion of the protest movements of Brasov, 1987), he travels unhindered abroad, meeting with the the State Secretary of USA in 1988, with officials from Foreign Office and even with Mihail Gorbaciov (Aracherian, 1998, pp. 121-123). His public presence will continue, paradoxically, in appearance, even after 1989 being promoted, till the end of his life, by important mass-media institutions as an “expert” in politology.

<sup>49</sup> The historians have identified several categories of dissatisfied people inside the Communist Party: party activists marginalized due to the risk they may represent for those already in function; party activists scared by the tendency of autonomy towards the USSR of the Ceaușescu regime; former party activists from the Stalin period, expelled from power by Ceaușescu's group; former activists removed for their abuse or lack of capacity; former activists marginalized for their family relations with people presumed to being part of the Soviet espionage network. To them are added the superior officers from Army and Security, dissatisfied by the subordination they had to respect towards the party and some of its restrictive decisions (Stoenescu, 2004, pp. 102-104).

<sup>50</sup> All the Party Central Comitee's decisions passed in unanimity, without exception (at least the known ones).

this way that the involvement of some characters from inside the system in “*reforming*” processes is permitted and encouraged<sup>52</sup> (Stoenescu, IV, 2004, p. 21). After 1988, more visible actions of criticizing the regime also appear in Romania, the most significant of them being the document known by the name of *The Letter of the Six*, signed by six former leaders of the Communist Party<sup>53</sup>. As well as *the civic dissidence, the political dissidence* uses the media promoting tools, *The Letter of the Six* being made public through *Radio Free Europe*. Its strategic goal, as one of the signers explained, was that of inducing a brake between the party mass and Ceausescu, for creating a reforming wing on the Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia patterns (Revista 22, June 6, 2002). The occasion of “reforming” the communist regime in Romania by a regular method, at the XIV<sup>th</sup> Congress on the spring of 1989 and after that at the CPEX (Executive Political Committee) on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1989, wasn’t fructified inside the party (Stoenescu, I, 2004, p. 19).

The political dissidence inside the communist party, externalized during the last year of regime, it’s mainly a come-back phenomenon of the komintern level, dissatisfied by its “marginalization” and by the government policy of Ceausescu, considered by him “heretical”, “dissident” from the tough ideological core of communism. To this komintern level groups have been added, wishing political assertion during the favourable historical moment. The actions of these groups represent the consequences of a particular internal tension around the control of the party, for this reason some historians well-founded considering them *factionist*, not *dissident*<sup>54</sup> (Tismăneanu, 2009).

By the opinion of some historians, the removal of Ceausescu combined three types of groups coming from inside the communist apparatus: a *military* one (generals Ion Ioniță, Nicolae Militaru, colonel Radu Nicolae and others), a *perestroika* one (Ion Iliescu, Virgil Măgureanu etc.) and a *komintern* one (Silviu Brucan, etc.) (Săndulescu, 1996, p. 18).

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<sup>51</sup> At the XIX Party Conference, in June 1988, Mihail Gorbaciov initiated radical reforms through which to lower the party control over the governmental and administrative apparatus. A new formula of political organisation and a new vision over reforming the Soviet economy and society, known as Perestroika (“to restructure”, in Russian), were proposed.

<sup>52</sup> The context of elaborating “the letter of the six” is described by Gheorghe Apostol, its initiator: “I was ambassador in Brasil and, seeing that the things changed around our country, that Romania was becoming an island, I decided that someone had to act so a change will be produced in our country, too” (Source: **Rompres**, May 2006).

<sup>53</sup> Gheorghe Apostol, Grigore Răceanu, Constantin Pârvulescu, Alexandru Bârlădeanu, Corneliu Mănescu, and Silviu Brucan. The last three signers were part of the National Salvation Front Council, after the Revolution.

<sup>54</sup> V. Tismăneanu wrote in one of his articles about this aspect: “But the six of them were not dissidents. I can not imagine a dissident from that time like Havel, Michnik, Geremek, Tudoran, Goma, Haraszti, Simecka or Jelev writing in favour of the initial mission of the secret police. The letter actually was a plan of reforms at high level, incapable of articulating the resurrection of civil society and the need of economical and political pluralism. It was about some minimalist claims, not promoting a vision different indeed than the traditional line of the oligarchic communism (Tismăneanu, 2009).

The plot actions and later the putsch actions of these internal factions of the party, that are developing encouraged by Moscow close to the collapse of the regime, reach out inside the party a favourable environment marked by opportunism, greed and blight. A significant reservoir full of (mute) dissatisfaction inside the party was represented by the decisions of N. Ceausescu during the '70s, regarding the reduction of some privileges owned by the Nomenklatura and the party activists: the cancellation of the additional emoluments as a result of being decorated, the reduction of the possible owned houses number, the obligation to drive cars made in Romania, the sanction over luxury and the impossibility of spending the significant incomes from privileges and corruption etc. One of the period's historians describes in a relevant way the pervert effect of some of these measures: *"It was one of the reasons for the development without precedent of corruption, small dirty agreements, schemes and local affairs through which the products of comfort were trafficked, from fresh fish to carpets made of bear fur, and unto high level of corruption, the traffic of influence. Living with the fear of being caught or reported to the Security, they were acting more and more visible and noisy in the personality cult of Ceausescu, giving tough sanctions in their suborder and extending the connections inside the party with the only goal of securing their protection. (...) They "were managing" by abusive using of their positions in order to solve some personal problems, a syndrome sustained by a vaste network of connections, in suborder, on the horizontal and upper, closer to the head of the hierarchy, plus corruption. For their illegal actions and abuses to be accepted, for their political and professional inefficiency not being seen, they were promptly, most of the time brutally and exaggerated, responding to the party's orders. (...)"* (Stoenescu II, 2004, p. 753; I, 2004, p. 255).

The public interventions of the political dissidence, before and also right after the collapse of Ceausescu's regime kept a line according to the directions outlined by the Perestroika-Moscow, watchful in the same time over the interests of the influence areas of the country. One example is even the content of the quoted letter, the six authors presenting the Security, the main repression institution in the history of communism in Romania, as one of the "revolutionary accomplishments of the people" (Tismăneanu, 2009), giving a positive sign for the Security in the direction of collaborating.

In the same category, but on the other dimension, we find Ion Iliescu's later action, from December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1989, of going to the Soviet Embassy in order to ensure about Moscow's<sup>55</sup> confirmation (Stoenescu, 2004, II, p. 517-518).

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<sup>55</sup> "I want to tell you that I am in touch with the Soviet Embassy and I have informed them about the situation we are, so they communicate this to Moscow, so it will be known who we are and what we want" (Iliescu, the preamble of th CFSN Statement, Romanian Television, apud Stoienescu, II, 2004, p. 559).

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## ANNEX

**CHART 1: The Share of the Communist Party Members out of the European Countries' Total Population at the End of the II World War**

	Country	Members of the communist party*	Total population**	The percent of communist party members out of the total population	Year
1.	France	300.000	41.000.000	0.73%	1941
2.	Czechoslovakia	80.000	12.000.000	0.7%	1936
3.	Hungary	30.000	9.000.000	0.3%	1944
4.	Bulgaria	10.000	6.500.000	0.15%	1941
5.	Yugoslavia	15.000	16.000.000	0.1%	1941
6.	Italy	15.000	34.700.000	0.04%	1941
7.	Great Britain	18.000	48.780.000	0.03%	1939
8.	Austria	1.000	6.800.000	0.014%	1945
9.	Greece	600	7.300.000	0.008%	1944
10.	Romania	1.000	15.000.000	0.006%	1944

\* Chiper, 1998

\*\* The data result from the Population Censuses and the evaluations based on them and published by GeoHive: Global Statistics, [www.geohive.com/earth/census.aspx](http://www.geohive.com/earth/census.aspx).

**CHART 2: Ethnic Composition of the Romanian Communist Party Members in 1933**

	Ethny	% of all the communist party members *	The amount of the ethnic group out of Romania's total population **
1.	Romanians	22.52%	71.9%
2.	Hungarians	26.43%	7.9 %
3.	Jews	18.02%	4%
4.	Russians	6.01%	2.3%
5.	Ukrainians	4.20%	3.2%
6.	Bulgarians	8.41%	2%
7.	Others	10.21%	8.7%
8.	Not identified ***	4.2 %	—

\* Chiper, 1998

\*\* Population Census, 1930 (*Enciclopedia României*, I, 140).

\*\*\* Representing the PCR members from Basarabia and North Bucovina, territories annexed by USSR in 1940 (1944).

**CHART 3: The Religious Repression in Romania. Based on Cults Comparison**

	Cult	Total number of clergy in 1930	Number of enprisoned priests (1948–1964)*	Percent of enprisoned of the total clergy
1.	Orthodox	8250 <sup>1</sup>	1725	20,9%
2.	Greek-Catholic	1600 <sup>2</sup>	226	14%
3.	Roman Catholic	? <sup>3</sup>	165	? <sup>3</sup>
4.	Reformed (Calvin, Lutheran, Unitarian)	1200 <sup>4</sup>	65	5,4%
5.	Neo-Protestant	–	25	–
6.	Muslim	270 <sup>5</sup>	23	8,5%
7.	Judaic	360 <sup>6</sup>	13	3,6%

<sup>1</sup> Population Census, 1930 apud *Enciclopedia României*, 1938, 422.

<sup>2</sup> Population Census, 1930 apud *Enciclopedia României*, 1938, 425.

<sup>3</sup> Unnown data.

<sup>4</sup> Population Census, 1930 apud *Enciclopedia României*, 1938, 432–435.

<sup>5</sup> Population Census, 1930 apud *Enciclopedia României*, 1938, 440.

<sup>6</sup> According to the data of the Population Census, in 1930, the Judaic community in Romania counted 731 rabbis. (Apud *Enciclopedia României*, 1938, 439.) Due to the World War II events, the data of the Population Census from 1930 are not anymore relevant for the after war situation because the Jewish population of Romania was 756,930 at the Population Census from 1930 and in 1945 aprox. 410,000 Jews remained in the country (World Jewish Congress, *The Romanian section "Jewish establishments in Romania"*. *Statistic Memento*, Bucharest, 1947, 30, apud Marcu Rozen, 21–24) We estimated the rabbis' number by reducing it on the proportion of the believers number reduction.

\* Caravia, 1998, 12.

**CHART 4: The Evolution of the Number of Romanian Communist Party Members (1945-1989)**

	Year	The number of PCR members
	1944	1000 <sup>1</sup>
	1945	55,000 <sup>1</sup>
	1955	600,000 <sup>2</sup>
	1965	1,450,000 <sup>2</sup>
	1975	2,580,000 <sup>2</sup>
	1985	3,500,000 <sup>2</sup>
	1988	3,700,000 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Central National Historical Archives, C.C. of P.C.R. fund, Chancellor's Office, 32/1945 file apud "Magazin istoric", 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Stamatescu & cl., 2009, 45.