



ORIGINAL PAPER

Aspects regarding the oppression of the religious cults during the communist regime in the files of the Romanian Securitate

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Abstract

The relationship between the State and the religious cults in Romania during the communist regime is a new subject among the preoccupations of the historians and it is still a controversial subject from the perspective of the complex realities that have determined the coordinates of this relationship. The problem is insufficiently investigated, but with the opening access to the documents in the archives of C.N.S.A.S., the study of the files reveals new problematic aspects of the matter. The state control over the activity of the cults and over the religious behavior was based on a new legislation, with the help of the cult inspectors, employees of the Ministry of Cults, in charge with the surveillance of every cult administrative unit, from parish to Patriarchy. In addition to that, there was an unofficial control exercised through a web of informers and collaborators of the institution named Securitate, founded by Decree no. 221/ August, 30, 1948. After the 6th of March 1945, beginning with the first months after its installation, the new govern led by Petru Groza, ordered numerous arrests among the clergy of all confessions. Although many of them were released the same year, some remained suspects and some of them, probably under the constant threat, accepted later the collaboration with the Securitate. The political views of the suspects before August, 23, 1944 were the main reason, but also a pretext for the repression against some outstanding representatives of the cults. Using as research method the analysis of documents in the files of C.N.S.A.S. archives, this study reveals the means of repression of the communist authorities against the cults, the state's approach of the spiritual and religious life as a constant threat to the regime, and the mechanisms through which some personalities as Mina Dobzeu, Iuliu Hîrțea, Dumitru Bejan and Mihaly Godo were surveilled, condemned and prosecuted, and others, such as Gheorghe Moisescu collaborated with the Securitate.

Keywords: *communism, Securitate, political police, religious cults, oppression*

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Premises

The relationship between the state and the religious cults in the Romanian communist regime involves the state's hostile attitude towards religion reflected in an atheist public discourse that promoted the scientific materialism as unique perspective on reality. Nevertheless, the Romanian people's history, in which an important role had been played by religiosity, and the lack of legitimacy of the new regime imposed from abroad, have determined at least in the beginning of the communist era, a moderate approach compared to the harsh oppression in the Soviet Union. Thus, the expressions of religiosity had to be gradually restricted by repressive means, both officially, through new legal measures, and unofficially, through a strict control over the activity of the cults, with the aid of an informative system with numerous ramifications, of the former Securitate. Under the apparent freedom of conscience and religion, stated by the Constitution in 1948, in fact the new government was only restricting these legal rights. Only 14 religious cults were recognized as legal; among the abolished was the Greek-Catholic or United with Rome Church, with a tradition of over two centuries, under the accusation of having served the imperialism and having fought against the new social order, against the people itself thus. The abolishment was instituted through the Decree 358 in December, 1st, 1948 (Cârstea, 2012: 474).

Generally, all the cults have suffered under the communist government. The arrests, the condemnations and the tracking of many personalities of the religious life considered leaders of opinion with the power to influence the believers, took place irrespective of religious affiliation, especially under the pretext of the former political orientation. What differ are the period in which the oppression was harsher and the degree of repression in terms of consequences on the activity of every cult. Pedro Ramet, an author specialized in the study of the relationship state-Church in the communist regimes, identifies six major factors that explain the different treatment on the religious cults in communist Romania: "the number of adepts of the religious organization, its willingness to be subordinated to the demands of the political authorities and the possibility to be infiltrated and controlled by the political police, the problem of dependence to a foreign authority, the loyalty or lack of loyalty during the World War II, the ethnical configuration of the state and the dominant political culture" (apud Tismăneanu, 2006: 471). Based on these arguments, we can explain why the oppression was harsher on the main cults in terms of number of adepts, with the difference that the Catholic Churches represented a more serious threat because they were subordinated to the Vatican, having thus relationships with the West, considered bourgeois and capitalist, with elements who could take action from abroad against the construction of the socialist society.

Methodology

The research method used in this article is the document analysis. From the files of C.N.S.A.S. archive I have studied five representative cases for the relationship between the state and the religious cults in the communist period and for the role of the institution called Securitate in the cults' oppression in general and in the lives of some personalities of the religious life such as Mina Dobzeu, Iuliu Hîrțea, Dumitru Bejan, Mihai Godo and Gheorghe Moisescu, in particular. Using the bibliographical study, I have completed and put into a larger context the information acquired from the files.

Case studies

Mina Dobzeu is a well-known personality of the orthodox spirituality prosecuted during the communist era because he repeatedly criticised the government's anti-religious policy. He remained in the Romanian people's memory as the monk who converted to the Orthodox faith, his comrade in prison, the Jew Nicolae Steinhardt, on March, 15, 1960. After he wrote the manuscript called "Adevărul" (The Truth) using a chemical pencil, multiplied and spread it in the village Brădicești, Dolhești commune, Fălciu County, where the hermitage he was living in from 1948 was settled, the priest Mina Dobzeu becomes a target for the local Securitate. According to the case investigators, the manifesto had an "anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist, anti-Stalinist and anti-democratic" character, as it is written in a reference signed by an officer of the Securitate, on April, 25, 1949 (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P21363/ vol. 1: 1). At the examinations, he declared he was not against the communist regime, but he was "ready to endure anything for his religion" (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P21363/ vol. 1: 1). By the Sentence no. 733/1949, Mina Dobzeu was found guilty for the crime of public agitation, according to art. 327 al. III Cod penal combined with D.L. no. 856/1938 and condemned to 3 months correctional imprisonment (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P21363/ vol. 1: 50). After the execution of the sentence, he would remain in the attention of the authorities. In 1959 he is charged again in a penal lawsuit with the crime of machination against the social order, according to art. 209 (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P 126777, vol. 1: 1). In May 1959, he wrote "a letter with mystical character and hostility directed against the state social order in P.R.R." (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P 126777, vol. 1: 1), multiplied it in 13 copies and sent it to the leaders of the Romanian Orthodox Church and to the professors of the Theological Institute in Bucharest. From 1969, priest Mina served in the Monastery of Saints Peter and Paul in Hussy; he was the abbot of the monastery between 1978 and 1988. In 1988 was arrested again for sending President Nicolae Ceausescu seven letters regarding the morality of the Romanian people and atheism, asking the president to respect the Romanian orthodox calendar, to respect the people and its Christian morality, its traditions and to not impose on the people an improper atheist conviction (Voicu, 2015).

Iuliu Hîrțea was priest and professor at The Greek-Catholic Theological Academy in Oradea. On October, 28, 1947 he was abusively arrested and imprisoned in Oradea Penitentiary, without being informed about the reasons of this action, as shown in a file request submitted by Hîrțea on February, 5, 1948 (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, dossier I 3569: 00001). According to a note on his file, he got into the Securitate's attention for "hostile manifestations" (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, dossier I 3569: I) and his characterization made by the investigators states that he was "a sympathizer of Iuliu Maniu", but "he had never worked on the surface" (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, dossier I 3569: 00002). The reasons stated in the files are unconvincing and legally unfounded. One of them concerns the publishing of some brochures and religious almanacs, a position that was suppose to give Hîrțea the opportunity to organize and lead, together with priest dr. Maxim Virgil, "the ideological struggle of the reaction, which has lately become the Church's fight against communism" (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, dossier I 3569: 00002). He was released on February, 1949, after 15 months of detention in which he was held without being tried and convicted. He was actually strategically kept in detention and released after the Romanian United Church had already been put into illegality by Decree no. 358 in December 1948. This illegal status of the Church did not stop the Greek-Catholic clergy to clandestinely consecrate Hîrțea as bishop, on July, 28,

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1949 by Papal Nuncio O'Hara (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P000378, vol. 1: 1). It was a difficult position to be in charge of administering a disbanded diocese of Oradea and help the families of the priests forced to convert to Orthodoxy. The Securitate files of Iuliu Hîrțea give many clues of the oppression's dimensions of the Greek-Catholic Church in the communist regime. The incriminating documents stated that almost all the people who have contacted or communicated with the bishop of Oradea were either arrested or detained (Gavril Stan), or condemned for high treason (the clandestine bishops Dragomir and Ioan Ploscaru, the Franciscan monk Mihail Rotaru, or interned at labour camp (bishop Frențiu) (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P000378, vol. 1: 2). In addition to that, the penal file to incriminate Hîrțea contains other seven names that appear in the trial sentence of people condemned for high treason, complicity to high treason, instigation, omission of denouncement: Vasile Andercău, who was appointed by Hîrțea in the autumn of 1950 general vicar of Oradea (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P000378, vol. 1: 7), Vasile Hosu, also consecrated vicar by Hîrțea in the summer of 1950; Dumitru Pascal, a Franciscan monk who urged the congregation not to comply with the obligation to move to Orthodoxy; Gavril Stan, priest, professor at the Theological Academy in Oradea, rector between 1939-1945); Elisabeta Sălăjean, a believer who intermediated the money transfer from the Vatican to the clandestine bishopric of Oradea; Augustin Olah, a priest who initially signed the adherence to Orthodoxy, then he retracted his declaration in front of the clandestine vicar Magyar Augustin; Virgil Maxim, a priest who continued to serve in clandestinity (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P000378, vol. 1: 7-13). By the penal sentence no. 429/1953 of the Military Territorial Court in Oradea, on July, 6, 1953, Iuliu Hîrțea was condemned to 12 years labour and 5 years civic degradation for the crime of high treason, according to art. 190-191 Cod penal (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P000378, vol. 1: 316-325).

Dumitru Bejan was a military priest when he was taken prisoner by the Russian army in 1942, along with 1200 other Romanian officers. In a classified note about the reasons for Bejan's arrest and condemnation, the description of those over one thousand Romanian officers was related to the fact that the regime was considering them as divided into two camps: Volunteers (democrats, that means friendly to the regime) and Reactionaries (adepts of the old traditional political parties) (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P 051127, vol. 1: 5). According to the same document, the priest was included in the Reactionaries camp and he was part of the legionary group led by Nicolae Chivulescu among the prisoners in Oranki interment camp (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P 051127, vol. 1: 6). He was very close to get executed in Moscow, condemned by a military court, because the Russian authorities found a manuscript Bejan had written on birch bark, in which he stated that Basarabia and Bucovina were Romanian territories (Marinescu, 1996: 281). He was released and sent back to Romania in August, 18, 1948. The troubles for the ex-prisoner would not cease in his own country. He was arrested on April, 1949, by the Security organs and send to trial at the Military Territorial Court in Bucharest for maintaining contact with the old comrades in the Russian detention. By the sentence no. 77/1950, he was condemned to 8 years correctional prison, period calculated from the arrest date, in fact seven years from the date of the sentence (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P 051127, vol. 1: 5-6). That means he had already spent a whole year in arrest until the prosecution file was completed. After he finished his sentence, he was forced to settle in the village Răchitoasa, Fetești rayon, Constanța region, and also he was forced to work as day labourer between 1958 and 1963 (A.C.N.S.A.S., Penal fund, dossier P 051127, vol. 1: 7-8, 36). The relationships with the other prisoners from Oranki interment camp were

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again the reason for a new investigation and condemnation to 25 years hard labour and 10 years civic degradation by the sentence no. 349/1959 given by the Military Court in Constanța, for machination against the social order, a crime stated in art. 209 Cod penal. In addition, his properties were confiscated. Bejan was released in 1964, but he would constantly remain in the attention of the Securitate.

The Securitate's investigations in the early 70's show that there was communication between the former prisoners in U.S.S.R., Oranki interment camp, but as the files reveal, the "legionary activity" itself had a religious expression; the bond between the former comrades in suffering was a very profound friendship, with long discussions and letters about theological and missionary themes, exegeses of the Apostle and the Gospel, with interpretations according to the contemporary realities. The entire "conspiracy" had as an objective a biblical dictionary Bejan was working on and the help he was asking from his friends to multiply the manuscript (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, dossier I 210832, vol. 2: 9).

A large number of pages in the files are dedicated to the surveillance measures, to the establishment of intelligence objectives for the Securitate's agents, although there weren't any concrete evidence to demonstrate Bejan's hostile activity towards the regime. Perseverance and suspicion are the key words that define the communist government's attitude towards the former political detainees. As the jurisprudence in the communist regime shows, in many cases the faults in the political past of the convicts were forcibly assigned. The lack of evidence was not perceived as a sign of a clean social activity, but as a deficiency in the activity of the agents and informers of the former Securitate, as shown in an analysis note of The Internal Affairs Ministry in February, 16, 1976 (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, dossier I 210832, vol. 2: 32).

Hundreds of pages of informative notes record common aspects of a day-to-day life of a man whose rights were constantly violated, whose ideas, words and movements were constantly interpreted. The informative surveillance file is periodically reopened for the same reasons related to Bejan's „legionary" past and the maintenance of the relationship with the former prisoners in the Soviet internment camp. Bejan was prematurely retired from the religious service, betrayed by his own brothers in service of Christ's altar and was constantly surveilled until 1989.

Mihai Godo was a catholic priest of Hungarian origin, member of the Jesuit monastic order. He was condemned in 1953, by the Military Court in Cluj, sentence no. 234/1953, to 10 years prison for complicity in the crime of high treason, for "incitement to action of Catholic priests and faithful against the Church recognized by the state, for multiplying and disseminating a circular with spiteful content" (A.C.N.S.A.S, Informative fund, dossier 38731: 1). In fact, he crossed the border illegally, went to Budapest, where he met with the superior of the Jesuits, whom he presented a report about the activity of the Jesuit order in Romania. According to the accusations, he came back and conducted "hostile activities" based on the instructions received from bishops Aron Marton and Augustin Pacha, against the Orthodox Church and the measures taken by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, spreading hostile messages and also initiating "subversive organizations" (A.C.N.S.A.S, Informative fund, dossier 38731: 4).

He was released in November, 15, 1962 (A.C.N.S.A.S, Informative fund, dossier 38731: 1). After leaving prison, in 1964 he had to settle for an obligatory residence in Gherla. After the ban was lift, he moved to Herculane, where he is suspected by the Securitate for his connections with people from R.F.G. The threat he represented for the regime is shown in the following report fragment: "The investigations established that the

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objective poses as a martyr of religion and that in the religious services and the preaches to the believers he shows that he suffered a lot for religion, that was even sentenced to many years in prison because he didn't betray his believers, and the way he was treated is illustrative for the manner in which faith is seen today. He also leads an intense propaganda of faith and shows evidence of religious fanaticism" (A.C.N.S.A.S, Informative fund, dossier 38731: 4).

Important aspects in the activity of the Catholic Church in Romania can be found in the former Securitate's files. One of these concerns the material support the Catholics in Romania were receiving from Germany. Godo confessed to one of the Securitate's undercover sources that an automobile was sent to him, but he refused to take it because of the amount of duty taxes. He received a motorcycle instead and paid lower taxes for it (A.C.N.S.A.S, Informative fund, dossier 38731: 4). Other aspects in the informative notes reveal that he had relatives in Vienna, he accommodated and had various connections with Austrian, Hungarian and German tourists and those relationships had put him in touch with Catholic organisations who supported him with cult objects, books, vestments and even an electric shaver (A.C.N.S.A.S, Informative fund, dossier 38731: 64).

Godo's activity was suspected for espionage for R.F.G., but they proved to be unfounded and no evidence was found. Nevertheless, the informative surveillance continued for hostile activity against the regime (A.C.N.S.A.S, Informative fund, dossier 38731: 6).

Gheorghe Moisescu is one of the cases in which the past, in particular the editorial activity in the religious press, became an instrument of blackmail for collaboration with the Securitate. In 1956, the priest of the Romanian orthodox community in Vienna, Leonida Popescu, with the codename "Dănilă" is called back to the country and replaced by priest Gheorghe Moisescu, an erudite, with university studies abroad in Athens, Warsaw and Lvov, doctor in theology, professor at the Theological Institute in Bucharest, aged 50 years, with the codename "Zamfir Pană" (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 12, 16-17), later changed to „Ionatan" (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 74, 76 and others). Between 1936 and 1949 he was a secretary of the Holy Synod of the B.O.R. and editor in chief of „Biserica Ortodoxă Română", the official publication of the Patriarchy; at the time he moved to Vienna he was the editor of „Mitropolia Olteniei". The new agent had as objectives: „to strengthen the Romanian colony in Austria, so the influence of the fugitives on that community would diminish and to draw the Romanians in Vienna and the Austrians born in Romania to the communist cause" and "to counteract the hostile activity against our country carried out by the fugitives organisations, especially «The Christian Association of Romanians», «The Cultural Association» and the Catholic mission" (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 14-15).

The political past of Gheorghe Moisescu was limited to writing anti-Soviet and anti-communist articles during the Second World War and hosting the Iron Guard leader Liviu Stan, who was director general at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, during the legionary government. But the last aspect wasn't incriminatory because he declared himself as being a convinced partisan of Nicolae Iorga, his former professor, and could not agree with the legionary methods that led to the assassination of his professor (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 17-18).

The compromising material, consisting of anti-Soviet and anti-communist articles, was the reason to constrain him to collaborate with the Securitate, starting with May, 22, 1949. The collaboration proved to be prolific, as he was directed to "hostile elements in the orthodox clergy in Bucharest (the Patriarchy and the Theological

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Institute)” (I A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 18).

The essay characterizing the agent records that he wrote notes about “legionnaires” Tit Simedrea, former metropolitan of Bukovina, Liviu Stan, Nicolae Popescu, Efrem Enăchescu, about metropolitans Iustin, Firmilian Marin etc. (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 18) and that he provided information on his own initiative about the existence in Bucharest of a “subversive group consisting of hostile clergy, headed by the legionnaire monk Benedict Ghiuș”, information that led to the opening of an group tracking information action, in which Gheorghe Moisescu took part, to arrest those involved (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 18-19).

At the moment he was sent to Vienna, Moisescu had his family in Romania, a wife and three children, all students (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 76), who remained in the country. He was seeing his family periodically, on which occasion the agent Ionatan was instructed by the Securitate’s agents to accomplish the informative objectives (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 167). The objectives of the conspirative action established by the Securitate include both positive actions for the religious life of the Romanian orthodox community in Vienna, as strengthen links between its members, organizing concerts of Christmas carols and Romanian folk music, revival of service and liturgical sermons, editing a magazine and an almanac of the Romanian Orthodox community, and also activities of informative surveillance of some personalities of the religious life who had illegally crossed the borders and settled in the West, such as Andrei Scrima (A.C.N.S.A.S., SIE fund, dossier I 3569: 377-380). Moisescu’s experience, his large theological knowledge, together with the appreciation he had from the Romanian Orthodox Church clergy would be used in international conferences with theological themes. In that context he would get in contact with several persons the communist regime was interested in.

Discussion

In the study of the former Securitate’s files, there is an undeniable fact: all the religious cults have suffered, with no exception. But the reasons for the oppression were different for each cult.

The Romanian Orthodox Church, with an impressive congregation of over 13 million believers, an institution with autonomy and tradition in the history of the Romanian people, was a very important actor in the society and thus it was seen since the beginning of the communist regime as a potential contributor to the efforts of reconstructing the society. In the people’s perception, the Orthodox Church was a spiritual and national institution connected to the very essence of their national identity (Hitchins, 1975: 315). In these conditions, the Popular Republic establishes on December, 30, 1947 recognised the Church as a social institution that, correctly administrated and guided, could have a great potential to promote the state’s ideology among the people. But its popularity had also disadvantages, the people’s piety around some spirituality centers such as monasteries and the development of the orthodox theology around faculties and seminaries had to be broken in order to have the clergy willing to participate at the construction of socialism. A series of arrests and condemnation followed starting with 1945. From these moments on, a constant negotiation started: for the elementary liberties of the cult, for the conservation of the old rites in terms of organisation, on one hand; and on the other hand, to transform the Church into an institution subordinated to the state, as

a social agitator who would participate in the construction of a new society. Ironically, the new regime did not favour religion, but it needed the religious institutions.

By far, the hardest situation after the establishment of the communist regime was that of the Greek-Catholic Church, suppressed in December 1948. Months before, there had been pressures on the united clergy to change their affiliation to the Orthodox Church, according to the Soviet model applied in Ukraine. Part of them accepted, another part refused, an act of courage that was not left unpunished: the superior clergy of the Greek-Catholic Church was arrested, together with a large number of priests who had either refused to pass to Orthodoxy, or they had initially signed but retracted their subscriptions afterwards (Tismăneanu, 2006: 464). The new government had seen a danger in the Romanian Church United with Rome since the early days of its establishment and the proof are the arrests of some of the clergy considered dangerous either because of their political views before August, 23, 1944, either because they were subordinated to the Vatican, according to their status, and thus they had connections to the democratic West. The arrests of the Greek-Catholic bishops and priests in October, 1948 were not followed by penal files; they were simply imprisoned and sent to Sighet without lawsuits or condemnations (Cosmovici, 2015: 172). All together, the Greek-Catholic Church did not cease its existence all along the communist period, “going down to the catacombs”, as Marius Oprea states (apud Vasile, 2003: 5).

The Roman-Catholic Church, few months after the Decree 358, which had suppressed the Greek Catholic Church, would gain new believers from the Greek Catholics who refused to become orthodox and also new ministers, who would secretly adopt the Latin rite, officiating the service in the catholic churches. This aspect was one of the reasons the members of this cult were persecuted, arrested or forced to settle where the authorities decided. The problem of the support given to the members of the United Church along with the inherent relationships with the West and the Papacy had led to accusations of high treason and espionage. These accusations were formulated against clerics, hierarchs and monks and the sum of all the sanctions represents hundreds of years of detention (Chivu-Duță, 2007: 17). In 1948 the oppression of the Catholic Church started by the denouncing of the Concordate with the Vatican in July 1948, followed by legal measures that permitted the abolition of denominational schools, confiscation of buildings and the suppression of most of the dioceses (Bodeanu, 2015: 420).

In a report of the General Direction of the Police, in September, 12, 1946, we can discover the considerations of the political system on the threat represented by the activity of the Catholic Church: “The Pontiff Sovereign has at his disposal a whole army of well-trained, disciplined and, above all, obedient priests, as they are not bound to any family or fortune. Each priest is at the same time a perfect intelligence agent of the Pope of Rome who can transmit through the hierarchic levels information of political, social, economical and religious nature that he gathers from his congregation” (apud Vasile, 2013: 20).

The control of the cults' activity and of the religious expressions was officially established through „the cult inspectors”, employees of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, later the Department of Cults, who had as attribution the surveillance of all the administrative cult units, from parish to Patriarchy. The Ministry of Religious Affairs represented the laic institution in charge with organising and conducting the religious cults' life in Romania and also had the obligation to inform the leading state structures regarding the religious activity (Vasile, 2015: 15). In the first years of the communist regime, the relationship between the cult's inspectors and the Securitate was deficient, but from late '50s the Securitate got involved in the appointment of territorial cult inspectors;

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some of the appointed inspectors were former officers of the intelligence structures. “The trade was mutually beneficial; one party received information about the positions of the various hostile clergy and faithful, and the other had comprehensive data on the activity of various cults and sects” (Vasile, 2015: 16).

The official control was doubled by an unofficial control, through a web of informers and collaborators of the Securitate (Security), established by Decree no. 221 of 30 August 1948. The Securitate’s surveillance was gradual and took different forms, with individuals or groups as targets: general informative surveillance (S.I.G., in original) or priority informative surveillance (S.I.P.), verification map (M.V.), individual surveillance files (D.U.I., in original), target file (about an institute, a hospital, a school or a company), or problem file (about former political detainees, former legionaries, cults) (Mareş, 2005). As seen in the files, the Securitate was in fact an instrument of the regime against its own citizens, because it was “the eyes and the ears” of the communist government surveilling the people (Mareş, 2005).

Conclusions

The files in the archive of the former Securitate unveil the existence of an undissimulated hostility against the religious element in society, and also a strategic approach of the state for the oppression of the cults, in order to diminish their influence in the masses, up to their disappearance.

The files analysed above are relevant for the attitude of the regime towards any possible threat to its ideology. Either it was only a protest against the anti-religious policy of the state, as in the case of Mina Dobzeu, or a refuse to embrace the new doctrine, the re-education, as in the case of Dumitru Bejan, or a clandestine cult activity as in the case of Iuliu Hîrţea, or a normal subordination to the cult leaders abroad, as in the case of Mihai Godo, the facts were rated as highly infractional. There is a significant disproportionally between the nature of the crimes and the manner they were legally qualified and the real threat to the political system, which was almost always exaggerated. The legal qualifications in the four cases analysed are the most common for the political detainees of the communist regime: *public agitation* for Mina Dobzeu – art. 327 Cod penal; *high treason* for Iuliu Hîrţea – art. 190, 191 Cod penal (an exaggerated qualification, as the crime in the Penal Code refers to transmitting information of national implication to a foreign power; *machination against the social order* for Dumitru Bejan – art. art. 209 pct. 1 Cod penal (another exaggerated qualification, because the finality of the actions of the former prisoners in the Soviet Union had not been proved and it had to do with their previous activity in the Soviet internment camp); and *complicity to high treason* for Mihaly Godo, as he had followed the instructions of the superior catholic clergy. Some other frequent legal qualifications were: *setting up a broadband or a group, espionage, sabotage, diversion, hostile attitude, public instigation, distribution of forbidden publications, aiding a criminal, failure to denounce* and *illegal border passing* (Rusan).

A compromising political past was a stigmat and the person had to carry through all his/her life and to bear the constant surveillance. Each personal file of those investigated and condemned had two distinctive sections: “The political activity before August, 23, 1944” and “The political activity after August, 23, 1944”. We can often find in the political activity before August, 23, 1944 the mention that the person was a member or a sympathizer of the Legionary Movement. As the files prove it, in some of the cases the accusations were simply invented (Enache, 2005: 300) or different aspects were

interpreted as legionary activity, as in the case of Bejan, whose friendship with the former prisoners in the Soviet Union's encampment was considered hostile towards the regime his entire life. In fact, some religious and mystical elements in the ideology of the Legionary Movement drew sympathies in the intellectual attitude from some priest and hostile activity against communist that had also a religious aspect was suspected by the new government to be legionary activity. As Enache considers, "If some of them have assumed the legionary creed all the way and have suffered for it, other approached the legionnaires through intellectual attitudes, avoiding an effective and profound implication in the Movement" (Enache, 2005: 301). Still, they were condemned to many years in prison and considered a permanent threat to the regime. In an analysis of the communist gulag in Romania, Petcu draws the same conclusion of arbitrariness when it comes to the relationship between religion and the legionary movement: "Not infrequently, religious aspects of the Romanian gulag literature were confiscated in an essentially political register, with the consequence of subordinating the religious sequence to the ideological space" (Petcu, 2015: 215).

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