

THE COLD WAR AND THE JUSTICE AS POLITICAL SHOW IN ROMANIA

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The *Tehran Conference* of the *Three Powers* (November 28 - December, 1, 1943) was stark naked tragedy for Eastern Europe: it actually consecrated U.S.S.R.'s supremacy in the area. Conference to cold war start up was a *small step* for the Western World to take: and take it did, with tremendous consequences.

The *Tehran Conference* was actually heralded by the *Moscow Conference*, of the allies' Foreign Affairs Ministers. On such occasion, Averell Harriman (American ambassador in Moscow) suggested (to State Secretary Cordell Hull) taking to Molotov sensitive *Polish question*; only to learn (in a state of shock) that *such trifles* are not open to debate, the US taking a lot greater stock in the U.S.S.R.'s adherence to a quadripartite co-operation principles agreement of the allied *Four Powers*. Roosevelt's rhetoric, so unexpectedly soon disproved by later developments, scored one more epic error of judgment¹.

Quoted trials we target are memorable instances of witch hunt in Romania; hence we deem of interest one piece of epiphany made public as early as action very time, by Robert Bishop and E.S. Crayfield's: who seem to think *cold war started at Ambassador Hotel, in Bucharest, in August, 1944*. The scene is worth evoking as momentous (small and large scale history are so akin, after all): British and American pilots but newly freed (by the 1944 August 23 coup set in government) were waiting in the lobby, to be dispatched for the airport... when two Soviet officers rushed in. Their allied comrades cordially greeted; to which the Russian frowned and ordered the receptionist rooms, *quick*. The desk man said rooms were not yet vacated by their British and American colleagues. The reply was *So kick'em out!* And they left without even looking up. One hour later the Russian had their rooms vacated, as ordered. Though looking pretty much like a propaganda reel of the cold war era, it all actually happened in the capital of a country which was to enjoy the full menu of Bolshevism that very year.²

For the naïve Westerners, who only very much later recognized Communism when they saw it (some only post Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*) the scene may seem trivial. We sure can read this cine-verite in many ways. Just one: cultural differences between the Eastern-Western allies were so deep cut and impossible to curb that it seems uncanny how everybody overlooked them, people at the top including. Centuries of aggressive Russian policy (known to originate in the Far-East) plus a quarter of a century of Soviet propaganda *later*, the Westerners were as baffled at 1944 place in time as they had been in 1917, where Russian real politick is concerned.

This item of small scale history will not open the worms can of cold-war *we didn't start the fire*.³ It points, rather, to the cultural variance of post-war history approaches (of generic humanism, in fact) as demonstrated by the Western world, respectively by Soviet Russia. Doublespeak and quack-act had been, in Soviet diplomacy, too long to ignore.

¹ W. Averell Harriman, Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1944-1946*, New York, 1975, p. 236

² Robert Bishop, E. S. Crayfield, *Russia Astride the Balkans*, London, 1949, p. 80-81

³ See a number of the most telling approaches: Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*, New York, 1965; D. Horowitz, *From Yalta to Vietnam*, Harmondsworth, 1967; Scott D. Parrish, *Soviet-American Relations. The Marshall Plan and the Division of Europe*, 1947, a study held in public world conference *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1945-1950*, Moscow, March 1944; Andre Kaspi, *Qui est responsable?* in *L'Histoire*, 1992, no. 151, pp. 10-18

In the spring of 1945, days after Yalta, Stalin confessed to the Yugoslav envoys that WWII was different to any by *stretching the victor's social system as large as the space his army covered*⁴; while sending to Bucharest the three-year plan for turning Romania into a Soviet country⁵.

And Romania was being turned into a Soviet: the Soviet Army take-over for a start; enforcement of the pro-Soviet dr. Petru Groza Government of March, 6, 1945, next; severe infringement of Yalta Agreement; November, 19, 1946 grossly forged Parliament polls; December, 30, 1947 coup, by which King Michael I was forced to abdicate, a Soviet republic being set in. All these years were witch hunt ridden (more especially so post November, 19, 1946, polls): set hard on real and virtual witches. The *Marshall Plan*, launched in 1947, came too late for Eastern European countries, already embarked on the cold war era. Anti-American propaganda principles, written at the Kremlin, were quick to be translated into Romanian; while the Communists-controlled media was unleashed against American imperialism. Muscovite reaction against the *Marshall Plan* was brutal, both as ideology and as political reaction: the Kominform was born and the Soviet social-political model was enforced upon the occupied countries.⁶

Taken over from Soviet source, the witch hunt was a grotesque political-ideological and juridical operation. It was meant for: 1. blaming on the old-time elites (political, social, intellectual, ecclesiastic) all of the disasters Romania passed through during war, and interwar, times; 2. creating a vast we-the-people's majority (unanimity, why not) around the Communist ideology and subjection of the country to the U.S.S.R.; 3. harassing and putting off all anti-Bolshevik local resistance; 4. building up the *New (Soviet) Man*, the brain-washed citizen, unconditionally devoted to Communist ideals.

By such fantast scenery deployed, by finger pointing at the working people's enemies and at the U.S.S.R.'s foes, by ripping the masks off pro-West intelligentsia, Anglo-American imperialist spies, nationalists, speculators, monetary reform opponents, (be they hidden inside the very Communist Party), the witch hunt took, for all practical reasons, as long as the whole of the cold war time.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn's document book (*Gulag Archipelago*, already mentioned) triggered a novel crisis of Old Europe's conscience (numb over scores of years of Soviet propaganda adopted - *political correctness* - by the European left) showing weird similitude between the Soviet and the Romanian witch hunt. A simple lesson, in terms of Master and novice, father and child.

All over Eastern Europe behind the Iron Curtain, the witch hunt operated by throwing the peoples into a state of shock, staggering under the hard blows they got and the Manicheist primitive logic of good vs. evil, patriot vs. traitor, worker vs. exploiter, Imperialism vs. Communism.

In Romania, the witch hunt was, on the one hand, hampered by the unpopularity of the Communist ideology rejective of most popular contemporary achievement – 1918's Great Union; on the other hand, it was enhanced by the scant culture of democracy, among most people, ignored by the elites along the process of Romania's modernization. That is why most of the people either shrugged back into indifferentism, or unconditionally embraced the offer of the Bolshevik apostles.

⁴ Milovan Djilas, *Conversazioni con Stalin*, Milano, 1962, p. 121; idem *Wartime*, New York- London, 1977, p. 437

⁵ I. Chiper, Florin Constantiniu, Adrian Pop, *Sovietizarea României. Recepții anglo-americeane*, Bucharest, 1993, p. 135-137

⁶ E. Mark, *The OSS in Romania 1944-1945. An Intelligence Operation of the Early Cold War*, in *Intelligence and National Security* vol 9 (1994), nr. 2, p. 329

The concept cannot be ignored of the theatre-trial, of such old European tradition; nor will we ignore that ideology demonization and ethnic scape-goating are known to have come in waves, densely adorning collective memory and imagination.

A ludic question impossible to overlook is what effect may have generated the witch hunt in cultural areas more robust than the East-European, as to a democratic tradition; again, Solzhenitsyn's orthodox introspection and indictment of evil could offer a key to a virtual reading of the traumas caused by the witch hunt in Eastern Europe.

But, no matter how rooted into Europe's history we might prove witch hunt to be, *Communist witch hunt* will remain unexplained; and it was all the more shocking in Romania, with the inexistence, over this territory, of religious wars, or popular anti-Semitism. At first, witch hunt felt like a wholly Soviet thing; soon after, it turned Romanian, in its own rights. A *localized denizen*, in philosopher Emil Cioran's logic. Many sources ascertain today Cioran's philosophy of the Communist ideal. Thus, in 1941, national composition of the Romanian Communist party is shown (in a report of the Internal Affairs Ministry) to be: 90% Jews, 5% Romanians, 5% varia⁷.

Statistics may be cold; Communist activist Belu Zilber's memories are definitely more emotional, as he depicts Romanian Communists in clear cut terms:

*Hungarians and Bulgarians who wished themselves cut off of Romania; workers who fancied themselves masters over the plants; Jews awed by anti-Semitism; unemployed, unskilled or mediocre; frustrated politicians, unable to cross over to parties different from their own; housewives, ugly or Bovaric; school children fed up with schools; this is how party activists were born.*⁸

This is how the witch hunters were born, during Communism.

Much similar is the history of Stalinist leading groups in Eastern Europe. Their common denominator is the Messianic idea of political predestination, contempt for national tokens, and total obedience to Kremlin.⁹ The Stalinist elites' obedience is the same in Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest or Budapest, as practiced by Rudolf Slansky, Laszlo Rajk, W.Gomulka or Ana Pauker.

General Ion Sanatescu, Prime-Minister of the August, 23, 1944, government of experts set up in Bucharest, was appalled by the ruthless self-important newly set in Romanian Communists:

*Communists who never meant a thing prior to the Russians' take over, thereby now protected and lavishly using their funds, have grown to be over confrontational; led by the Russians, they forgot they were Romanian, and set party goals beyond the country's.*¹⁰

In Romania, the first witch hunt wave was triggered at war-end confusion time, as soon as the Communists and their road-mates managed to control all political springs and levers. For better credibility, they needed major foes: the only, meeting the the job description, seemed to be the members of the National Peasantry Party. Such party had proved consistent defensive action for the national tokens and democracy; while its leader, Iuliu Maniu, enjoyed of a robust prestige, on both local ground and world scene.¹¹ He was a character and a perfect scape-goat for a model trial. The missing pretext showed up soon, on July, 14, 1947; when part of the party leaders, headed by

⁷ cf. ASRI, Fond P, Dos. 40002, vol 10, f. 463-467

⁸ B. Zilber, *Actor în procesul Pătrășcanu*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1997, p. 25

⁹ Vl. Tismaneanu, *Stalinism pentru eternitate*, Polirom, Iasi, 2005, p. 171

¹⁰ *Jurnalul generalului Sănătescu*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1990, p. 172

¹¹ See Apostol Stan, *Iuliu Maniu. Biografia unui mare român*, Saeculum IO, Bucharest, 1997; Reuben H. Markham, *România sub jugul sovietic*, Ed. FAC, Bucharest, 1996; *Iuliu Maniu. Un creator de istorie*, Muzeul Memorial Sighet, 2003; Cicerone Ionitoiu, *Viața politică și procesul Iuliu Maniu*, vol I, Bucharest, 1997 și vol II, Ed. Libra Vox, Bucharest, 2003

Deputy-President Ion Mihalache, were trapped by the Secret Service agents and apprehended in Tamadau, as they attempted defecting, by plane. Iuliu Maniu had assigned them to contact Western governments and make public information regarding the Soviet occupation of Romania.

Such frame up served the Communists a perfect dish, leading to a grotesque trial staging, where the public played prosecution witness. A classic of the Stalinist trials, class enemy denunciation sent loud echoes by far and large. Petru Groza's puppet government badly needed major support for its recognition.

They moved on in two steps: 1. public indictment of the leaders of the *national treason party*, by an ample media campaign, over July-October 1947; 2. the trial and, moreover, its news chronicle, over, roughly, November 1947 – all hot and sizzling with the *patriots' proletarian ire*.

The Tamadau frame up happened on Monday, July, 14, 1947; yet the Communist press only reported it on Thursday, July 17. The delay was turned to perfect use for a first hearing of the culprits and a reconstructive group picture at the place of the crime; which was also the debut of glorious wooden tongue career, in Romania.

Communist *Scântea* set the tone pitch in an incisive article, calling them *sold out to foreignty*. The logic of phrasing and the massive recourse to hyperbolas overcharge the language with aggressiveness, in a well tempered crescendo. Swinging between invective and eulogy, never fearing to mar its show of objectivity, it is a well grounded language study, each statement launching a value judgment, each phrase well aimed home.¹² Here is an excerpt, a Romanian text translated like word per word from a Soviet propaganda textbook:

All hateful of our democratic regime and meaning to upturn it, ganging with criminals and acting accordingly against the people, fearful of the public popular opinion for their crimes, a number of the NPP leaders, under direct orders of Iuliu Maniu, have attempted...

Here is a first Romanian wooden tongue Manifesto. The verbal rite suggests captious history subduing a language borrowing nominal style from science language and making place for infinite impersonality and severance from spoken language.

We-the-protesting-people enters stage the next day, as summoned by the Merlins:

*Sizzling with rage against country traitors, scores of thousands of workers in our Capital gathered in huge meetings and demanded as follows: harsh punishment of the traitors; apprehension of Maniu's accomplices; apprehension of Maniu; ban on Dreptatea.*¹³

The trial was started in the street, the mob was summoned to pronounce the indictment.

In the same *Scântea*, enters stage reputable journalist and future nomenclaturist Silviu Brucan, one of the first expert speakers of the wooden tongue. Ironical history recycled the survivor of Communism into a plotter against it; for, after December 1989, he was to become counselor of the new leaders in Bucharest and a theorist of Romanian original democracy. He spoke poised words in genuine sweet new style, then: witches did not stand a chance in hell, under his deft writing.

In deep, hardly reined, indignation, did our working people learn of the defection attempt of the NPP leaders gang; and great was its satisfaction at the news that their criminal plans, directed against our country, our Romanian people and its democratic regime, have been counteracted by the vigilant state organs.

The philippic follows, highly derisive, targeting Ion Mihalache, a major personality of the interwar Romanian political life stage, also known for his peasant style.¹⁴ *Peasant* Mihalache is reduced to naught by novel tags like *fascist*, *Nazi*, even *old foe of the Romanian people*. In a well run crescendo, here comes the indictment. As Mihalache had not yet experienced the *crushing*

¹² Fr. Thom, *Limba de lemn*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2005, p. 76

¹³ *Scântea*, July 18 1947, p. 1

¹⁴ Detalii la Apostol Stan, *Ion Mihalache. Destinul unei vieți*, Ed. Saeculum IO, Bucharest, 1999

*power of the iron fist of working class, as hitting its worst enemy, he was certainly going to. NPP leaders are banned from the political life stage, for ignoring the people, who in its worst moments never sold its liberty and right to life, by signing up with the foreign legion of world finance servants, such as famed Ferencz Nagy, Macek, Anders and other country traitors.*¹⁵

The simple logic, also efficient, was that the working people, as History's spokes person, repudiates imperialism and its home servants; and it feels like Maiakovski:

He who today does not sing with us,

That mass is

Against

us!

A small step to take, from poem-at-hand to handy rephrasing prose journalese, which was to accomplish marvels of the art of manipulation. The stakes are high: instilling social class hatred, up the point where the readers' personality would give way. While in a free society journalese is meant to form and inform, in totalitarianism it merely works as a tool for the power. Witch hunt journalese stylistics worked on a trial basis over Iuliu Maniu's trial.

On July, 19, 1947, oddly hurried Parliament lifts Iuliu Maniu's immunity (before formally accusing him) and also that of all of the other NPP leaders. The Communist press gloats. Enter stage more writers and all size delators. Main opposition Romanian party undergo mediatic lynching. The writers' league now have a chance to prove their obedience in wooden tongue drills. Their public prestige, in a culture where writers mattered for much, had to act upon the dishes of the sensitive scales which the public spirit is. Writer Zaharia Stancu, a star of future literary proletcultism, makes his debut, dedicating the NPP leaders an indicting series. Fully delirious, he named his witches *NPP*, contributing invaluable items to the national bestiary. The NPP *shamelessly looted the State*, setting the most inhuman taxes, *dictated massacre against the Lupeni and Grivița*¹⁶ *workers*, promoting *moral trash* and altering Parliament life to caricature. Iuliu Maniu is himself the object of derision, more exactly the myth of his genius is.¹⁷

At the beginning of August, 1947, NPP dissolution by government act is met with heartily clapping and Zaharia Stancu's talent strikes again.

*Dissolution of the plotters' party, of the national peasant treacherous cliques, is a just act of salvation of the Romanian State, of the Romanian people, an act serving peace, as well as our labor.*¹⁸

Here is a wooden tongue sample, of serving history's fated march. Party dissolution is equated with a freeing act, with saving Romanian State and Romanian people, goods and peace. The wooden tongue catches the hot flavors, hyperbolizing the event. These first writers impose an almost eternal reading grid on the NPP; for at NPP revival, after December 1989, out of the Gulag, survivors like distinguished politician Corneliu Coposu, were met with an ocean of prejudgment and belittling tags, 40 years long practiced. Mental resistiveness proved stronger than such party's novel European Christian democratic message.

The NPP leaders' trial was staged more for the sake of the public than for the cause of truth. The massive Public Prosecutor's indictment act, a boon for the press, booked beforehand, could issue no reasonable proof of guilt. The new ingredients were picked from the world stage: NPP leaders' treason was integrated into an ample international plot financed by the USA, meaning to upturn popular democratic regimes. Quoted major figures of plotting anti-Communist resistance were: *collaborationist Macek*, defecting Yugoslavia who, in early August, in Washington, had summoned a convention of Eastern Europe opposition parties' leaders; Ferencz

¹⁵ S. Brucan, *Cărțile au fost date pe față*, Scânteia, July 18, 1947, p. 1

¹⁶ Z. Stancu, *Drumul spre complot I*, România Liberă, July 21, 1947, p. 1 and 3

¹⁷ idem, *Drumul spre complot II*, in idem, 23 July 1947, p. 1 and 3

¹⁸ idem, *Dizolvarea*, România Liberă, August 3, 1947, p. 1

Nagy, from Hungary; Bulgarian agrarians' leader Dimitroff; Nicola Petkov and Mikola Icik, from Poland; all of them accused for wishing to turn their countries into *semi colonies of dollar democracy*. In January, 1947, in Warsaw, the espionage trial was beginning, of the right-wing peasant organization W.I.N, led by Count Groholski, as an accomplice of English Ambassador Cavendish-Bentick. In June, same year, in Belgrade, the treason trial took place, of the Yugoslav exile-government ex-Prime Minister Milos Trifunovici. In the summer of 1947, in Sophia, the sonorous theatrical trial took place of opposition leader Nicola Petkov. In April, same year, in Finland, the trial took place of the 1250 weapons secret stores managers, accused for alleged intentions of triggering an armed conflict between the U.S.S.R. and the Western world.

All such trials were depicted by the Communist media in Bucharest as parts of the great plot against the free peoples in Eastern Europe. In August, 1947, Nicola Petkov's sentencing to death, in Sophia, was sheer euphoria for Bucharest. The Communist media associated it with the trial of Iuliu Maniu group. In September, Petkov's death was greeted as a *lesson to country traitors*¹⁹, announced in the very opening of the NPP leaders' trial:

*As for our tools of the American help, our Manist country traitors who sold us to dollar democracy and again tried to make Romania into a Wall Street protectorate, their pay time has come. And nothing will be forgotten.*²⁰

It is the eve of Maniu trial; and the media already suggests the indictment.

In order to crush Maniu, eternal Silviu Brucan dismantles the Western myth of their former's resistance against Mihai Antonescu's regime: not only had he not resisted, but was actually protected by Antonescu's Secret Service. Mediatic lynching and gross forging of documents had their expected effect: Bucharester propaganda turned to the Soviet master's techniques. In fact, feared State Prosecutor Andrei Vasinski, but newly appointed Deputy Minister of external Affairs, was dispatched to Bucharest, to support Dr. Petru Groza's Government.

The trial of the NPP leaders, developed over October, 29, to November, 11, 1947, in Military Tribunal Bucharest, actually took place more in the press and in the Communist meetings. The indictment act points to the NPP's responsibility for all Romania's new and old disasters, while the accusation for supporting Antonescu's regime set up, hence Romania's *joining Hitler's in his criminal war*, is downright crushing. Maniu and his party had *led the Romanian reactionary forces*, being *devoted servants of foreign capital, agents of imperialism, who betrayed Romania's sovereignty*.²¹ Their Indictment Act is a masterpiece of falsity by omission, of history and evidence misinterpretation, of most elementary judicial logic perversion. The art of manipulation substituted the science of law. It had to extract out of the national history the NPP, instilled into collective memory as a bearer of foreign interests, alien to Romania. Such is the image I was induced over my student years. The media was always present by the side of the judges and prepared the public opinion for the apotheosis, a chronicle of a heralded death.

Traian Selmaru, a proletcultist writer of great momentum, made it into a quack derisive Caragiale, fit for a public who screamed for adrenaline; targeting Maniu's dignified air, stiff to almost Jesuit, at times:

*Defendant Iuliu Maniu. Moments of silence. Door slams open. Defendant drags his feet into the hall, somewhat sideways; and hesitant. Marked efforts to keep a stiff upper lip. Advances slow, like a broken toy.*²²

¹⁹ *Executarea lui Petkov*, Scânteia, September 28, 1947, p. 1

²⁰ T. Olaru, *Cum au robii trusturile internaționale România*, Scânteia, October 27, 1947, p. 1 and 5

²¹ *Procesul conducătorilor fostului P.N.T.*, Scânteia, October 31, 1947, p. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

²² Tr. Selmaru, *Interogatoriul lui Iuliu Maniu*, Scânteia, November 2, 1947, p. 1 and 3

Details and derision of character sober demeanor invite the inescapable conclusion: he is a (broken) toy of fate. Last stage of law-show is banning NPP leaders out of the Romanian people. Popular justice took over the right to exiling the traitors out of history. The mob was summoned to induce the court a feeling of obligation to inflexibility. Hundreds of ordered meetings are held, to require the blood of the people's foes. So whatever else could the court do, but observe the popular will? Sancta simplicitas!

The trial was an excellent pretext for parting up of the Communists, from their last road-mates, the national liberals. Foreign Affairs Minister, Gh. Tatarescu, is declared an accomplice of the accused. On November, 5, Deputies Room voted a motion against the liberals in the Government.

On November, 7, 1947, the people exulted celebrating the anniversary of the Grand October Socialist Revolution; never forgetting the country traitors. The Indictment Act, pronounced on November, 11 – life labor for Maniu and Mihalache – is no surprise for anyone. New people's meetings approve it. Theatrics hit paroxysm; yet the working people is somewhat dissatisfied (*life* would've been better, like for Petkov, in Sophia) still take what given, justice being done and foes pointed a finger to. The Court represented triumphant people. A sea of cablegrams were sent, indicting and exulting, by workers, peasants, and housewives, pupils, maimed, and so on. Genuine theatricals!

Political trial? Who coined the infamous phrase, directed to the people who but shortly fulfilled the justice norm needed before the people could dedicate themselves, victorious, to construction of socialism? Obviously, the imperialists. One inventive author deconspires... *conceptual* plotting. That was no political trial, but one of *betrayal and espionage*, so a penal case.²³ Their war, declared to their foes, was a prolongation of the war against the imperialist concepts. Vigilant regime had crushed the traitor group who could bring Romania on the verge of civil war, as it was happening in Greece. A novel war was the worst nightmare. The happy people and the providential government was entitled to congratulations for their common victory.

It is an expected epilogue, so the people take vows:

*We will stand vigil on and on, reinforcing our wakefulness; we will unmask, and pursue to the end, and nip in the bud, any tendency to attempt upon the life, the work and the peace of mind of the working class. We promise to work ever harder for better productions.*²⁴

Once the enemies are manacled, success flows in, free. First there's the fusion between the CRP and the SDP, launched on November, 14, by the *Program of the Unique Workers' Party*. But the grand finale was willfully delayed, until absolute victory could be called out from the roofs: the nineteen indictment acts did not seem perfectly satisfactory before one more, major, guilty party, joined in, i.e. *imperialism*. Imperialism had to be the 20th body to indict; and it picked all plot ends, loose in Romania, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, to knot into a final knot: Anglo-American imperialism. *Iuliu Maniu's trial is the indictment act of conquering imperialism, as stated by a people which proved its determination to defend its independence.*²⁵

This trial worked as the appetizer before main-course witch hunt. This successful experiment was to work as a gauge for the trials to come. The witch hunt fuelled the *permanent revolution* and reinforced the myth of the professional revolution man. A revolution with no foes *risks implosion*, being a speech with no virtuous follow-up: hence, the next witch hunt stage developed inside the very Communist Party.

Ironically, next trial's protagonist is the former trial's enactor, as a Minister of Justice. Set face to face, the two trials share witch hunt psychosis. The hunter was turned into the game,

²³ T. Olaru, *Nu un proces politic ci un proces al trădării*, Scânteia, November 13 1947, p. 1 and 6

²⁴ *Populația salută sentința împotriva conducătorilor fostului P.N.T*, idem, p. 5

²⁵ Nestor Ignat, *Al 20-lea inculpat*, Scânteia, November 17, 1947, p. 1 and 6

boomerang effect. Although his star was setting already as early as 1947, Lucretiu Patrascanu chose to zestfully run the Maniu trial, to prove his loyalty to his party. He even tried to testify for himself with such attitude during his own trial, but nothing was of any avail any more: for him, too, indictment preceded the trial proceedings. In ironical symmetry, the revolution touched the point where it devoured its progeny. And Lucretiu Patrascanu met the *hidden-witch* profile just fine. His resume befitted the genuine Soviet script of demasking the inside foes. Much like Maniu's trial, Parascanu's was one in the series of historical witch hunts. All things fell in place within the universal concept of revolution's energy conservation and metamorphosis. Time flowed by in Heraclites terms because approved by Marxist thinking. Revolution mixed up and minced everything, inescapably. Patrascanu, Slansky and such like... simple casualties, insignificant per total: they had afforded humanely hesitation, ignoring the fact that infernal machine *revolution* does not admit of any break of order. Such was the ultimate price to pay for ignoring the truth that history repeats itself, at least it does where revolutions are concerned.

Communism's omnipotent vanguard utopia *cannot make it without scape goats; procedures of their revelation, invention, indictment, subjection to public rejection and final annihilation have only turned more cruel and aggressive*²⁶, says Franz Borkenau, indicating one of the congenital terminal diseases of Communism. To each particular case its aftermaths. In Bucharest, as well as in Prague or Budapest, the Soviet counselors were unmistakably there. The first revelations about their role in those theatrical trials appeared at *Prague Spring* time.²⁷ In Bucharest they were proven to have involved themselves even more deeply, controlling both the political police and Communist leader Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej.²⁸

What was genuinely Romanian about it all is the *sieged fortress* air the Romanian Communist Party took on, the inside fights inherited from its under cover times, as well as the frustration generated by the Communists' lack of popularity before getting into power. Sectarianism and factionalism took time developing even after its full accession to power, Romanian Communism being founded on exclusivism, dogmatism and overall suspicion. And there was also an inferiority complex the Communist elite demonstrated (hence their anti-intellectualism), that acted as an aggravating factor. Which partly explains why there were so few intellectuals at the top of the party, the most prestigious, Patrascanu, being the victim itself of a famed frame up.²⁹

He was the son of a successful Romanian writer; he had his PhD in Leipzig; he was a most distinguished sociologist, economist and lawyer; hence his reputation (says C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea) of a most proficient Marxist theorist. He had set on such path with the Socialist milieus, had been in the 1921 founding Congress of the RCP; to later represent it by the Komintern; after a brief carceral time, his career took spectacular wings after the putsch against Marshall Antonescu he had been active in, together with King Michael, and the leaders of the historical liberal and peasant, parties.

In 1945 he was a member of the Central Committee of the RCP; over 1946 to 1947, he was in the Politick Bureau, as an influential character and champion of Romanian way to Communism. Gheorghiu-Dej first, then other Communist leaders, like Ana Pauker, Teohari Georgescu and Al.Draghici, suspected him of intending to go all the way up, into party leadership. Which triggered his fall: his roots were bourgeois, he ran an intellectual career, he had acted dignified in Moscow as negotiating Romania's truce terms with the U.S.S.R.; all factors contributing to his being finger

²⁶ Franz Borkenau, *World Communism : A History of the Communism International*, University of Michigan Press, 1971, p. 178

²⁷ Eugen Loeb, *My Mind on Trial*, New York, 1976; Jim Pelikan (coord.) *The Czechoslovak Political Trials*, Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1971

²⁸ Vl. Tismăneanu, op. cit. p. 327

²⁹ ibidem, p. 149-150

pointed as the perfect scape-goat of second phase Stalinist repression in Romania, i.e. unmasking of the plotters hidden within the RCP.

A Leninist at his start, Patrascanu believed Romania would put in five years to accomplish its bourgeois-democratic revolution. In a document requested by Andrei Vasinski, in 1944, Patrascanu advised co-operation with the petty bourgeoisie apt to compromise, so Communism could penetrate that milieu. During one of his hearings, he confessed he had chosen some of his road-mates so he could isolate Iuliu Maniu, whom he considered the most prominent enemy of Soviet-to-be Romania.³⁰ Poor Patrascanu ignored that the Soviet occupation little cared for Leninist ideology anymore, while the English and the Americans saw him as an exponent of a fraction worth encouraging.³¹ A marginal, already, at the time of Iuliu Maniu's trial, Patrascanu was not invited to the Committee for the People's Republic of Romania's Constitution. In despair, he contacted U.S.S.R.'s ambassador in Bucharest, who promptly informed Gheorghiu-Dej.³²

On February, 24 February, 1948, Communist *Scanteia* insinuated a dry cut piece of information: the Presidency of the Ministers Council accepted Patrascanu's resignation from his governmental position.³³

*I was asked to resign, like any bourgeois minister [...] the next day the S.S started tailing me.*³⁴

Once they revealed their hidden enemy, the demasking of the people's foe stage was to follow. Which happened over June 10 to 11, 1948, 2nd Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party. The resolution boomed like thunder, and Lucretiu Patrascanu was called *a typical give-up instance of class fight against exploitation, and of championing co-operation with the exploiters*. As early as 1945, Patrascanu had proven himself an enemy of the *laboring peasantry*, by advocating co-operation with the bourgeoisie and the rest of the peasantry; also, by attempting to *deny the party's leading role*.³⁵ Accusation flowed on, as stated for Tito, Kostov and Rayk. Patrascanu's apprehension, in August, 24, 1948, was shrouded into the thickest veils. For a start, the media gave out hints. Says August, 26, *Scânteia*'s editorial:

*One party member must never forget that his success is the party's, due to the party's just cause, aptness and mobilizing force of working class.*³⁶

At variance with Maniu's trial, when the media acted protagonist, this enemy demasking was played by a different rite. The tone pitch and the strategy was the party's exclusively, by the voice was of the leader, while the press acted discrete chorus. The party leader had the authority to crush the hidden enemy. At thoroughly selected times, Gheorghiu-Dej unleashed the ire hounds against his personal enemy, unmasked as an exponent of imperialism:

³⁰ ASRI, Fond P, dos. 40002, vol I, f. 51, *Declarația lui Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu* from November 18, 1949.

³¹ CVR Schuyler, *Misiune dificilă*. Jurnal, January 26, 1945 - September 10, 1946, Bucharest, 1997, p. 179

³² T. A. Pokivailova, *Tragica greșeală a lui Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu*, in *Magazin istoric*, August 1996, p. 48- 52

³³ *Scanteia*, February 24, 1948

³⁴ ASRI, Fond P, dos. 40002, vol I, page 8, *Declarația lui Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu* from May 2, 1949

³⁵ *Rezoluții și hotărâri ale CC al PMR*, vol I, 1948-1949, Ed. pentru literatura politică, Bucharest, 1952, p. 14

³⁶ *Modestia, podoaba cea mai de preț a comunistului*, *Scânteia*, August 26. 1948, p. 1 (editorial)

*Facts revealed during trials in Budapest, in People's Republic of Bulgaria, in People's Republic of Romania[...] unmistakably proved that Tito, Rancovici, Rayk, Branikov, Kostov, Patrascanu, and other such like co-thinkers, are agents of the English-American espionage services.*³⁷

Over Patrascanu's secret maniac trial time, in Bucharest, the Communist press only cut in a few times, to inform *public opinion of bourgeois and imperialist agent Lucretiu Patrascanu being proven a traitor.*³⁸

The people had a right to knowing its enemies, the Communist leaders were duly informing. In 1951, Gheorghiu Dej did his duty, as the most advanced vanguard of the fight against traitor Tito; and the association came natural, Patrascanu being already proven a *hardened traitor, a provoker and bourgeois agent on pay, like Rayk, Koci, Dodze and such like, led by the Belgrade agenture of American espionage, the Tito- Rankovici gang.*³⁹ Titoism-fascism was the last of the ingredients introduced into Patrascanu's Indictment Act.

At variance with Maniu's trial, unfurled along the classic Stalinist pattern, Romanian Communists missed the big show potential in Patrascanu's trial. After six detention years of exhausting hearings, most of the people in Patrascanu's group caved in, admitting to their guilts, as traitors and spies.⁴⁰ So, over April, 12 to 14, facing a careful selection of party activists and Securitate *organs*, Patrascanu's group trial was held; in secret, for two reasons at the very least: Patrascanu's resistiveness to all pressure, on the one hand; and Gheorghiu-Dej's fearing a possible judgment day of history, Patrascanu's death sentence coming at the time of Khrushchev's *melting* start up.

The trial enjoyed of strict Soviet counseling, which Gheorghiu-Dej had secured ever since 1949 upon Andrei Gromako's request⁴¹; and Romanian Securitate was headed at all times by a Soviet team led by Al. Mihailovici Sohorski.⁴² Still we can safely say that Patrascanu's trial was first and foremost a Romanian Communism inside job, *recte* Gheorghiu-Dej's, who wanted a potential rival out, Khrushchev's slippery time (for the old Stalinist) added as extra-pressure. By reinforcing his position by successive ousting of all of his opponents⁴³, Gheorghiu-Dej managed to go round his own ousting. For this one time, Bucharest did not get its regular theatrical show (wanted so hard that the trial was, incredibly, prolonged over six waiting years) as Budapest had, with Rayk's trial, or Prague, with Slansky's.

Yet, long years later, Nicolae Ceausescu thought it fit to let off some pressure, reminiscing the *obsessive '50s* to build up his own pedestal; so he left Pandora's treasure chest ajar, revealing the demeaning doings of Gheorghiu-Dej's barons. His victim was feared Internal

³⁷ Gh. Gheorghiu- Dej, *Partidul comunist din Jugoslavia în mâinile unor spioni și asasini*, in Scânteia, December 6, 1949

³⁸ Scânteia, June 20, 1950

³⁹ Gh. Gheorghiu- Dej, *Vigilența poporului în lupta pentru socialism*, in Pravda, September 4, 1951; originally published in Scânteia, September 6, 1951

⁴⁰ In extenso in the work *Principiul bumerangului. Documente ale procesului Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu* (coord. Mihai Giugariu), Vremea, Bucharest, 1996

⁴¹ G. P. Murasko, *Represiunile politice în țările Europei de Est la sfârșitul anilor 40: conducerea sovietică și nomenclatura națională de partid și de stat* in Analele Sighet, Ed. FAC, 1998, p. 339-349

⁴² see Sanda Golopentia, *Introducere la Anton Golopentia, Ultima carte*, Enciclopedia, Bucharest, 2001, p. XCII; interesting testimonies have been offered to us by two other victims from Patrascanu group, namely Belu Zilber, in op. cit. and Lena Constante, in *Evadarea tacută*, Florile Dalbe, Bucharest, 1995

⁴³ see Vl. Tismăneanu, op. cit, p. 145-172

Affairs Minister Al. Draghici, who had run Patrascanu's trial. The past was surfacing; yet not so much for Patrascanu's sake, as to brush away the moral authors of the 1954's assassination, the most prominent (Al. Draghici) being also serious competition to his succession. The ambitious leader in Bucharest found also uncomfortable the public memory of Gheorghiu-Dej, even though the latter had greased his wheels in 1952, at the time of witch hunt of Stalinist troika Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca and Teohari Georgescu.⁴⁴

In 1968, three years after accession to power, Ceausescu decided for a selective moral redemption of victims in Patrascanu's trial: not a theatrical trial this time, but a stern political one, started over the April, 22 to 25, Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the RCP. Stalinist past of a number of Communist leaders was denounced at a ten years' delay, as against Khrushchev's melting time. The working people was to find much too late the demeaning details of the power mechanics in the '50s. The people was invited to accept the conclusion that, later if not soon enough, the party was performing a justice norm. In such good tradition, the people acclaimed, the intelligentsia had the revelation of a virtual, missed, Romanian Tito, the media sang hymns of praise; and historians (of all ages) acted like novices, giving in to the new Master, missing the opportunity of negotiating new terms to come to, with the new regime.

The show, missed at 1954 time, was re-enacted in 1968; to the exclusive benefit of Ceausescu; who, to the end of his days, was to feed on the energy of such national justice champion leader figure, then and there created. Such was the ideal folklore Mediaeval voivode, whom Ceausescu upgraded and updated. Vlad Tepes, better known as Dracula, duly figured in his personal top.

40 years later, on December, 22, 1989 and during the following days, Bucharest was to enjoy the goodies of the historical show, staged by more or less the same visionary Stalinist stage directors, or by their progeny. On December, 25, ended the cold war era of the Stalinist trials historical series. This time's victim was Ceausescu himself, while the prosecutors were the Communists he'd withheld, or withdrawn. The people was there, as a protagonist, again, spurred to engage on the post December 22, 1989, witch hunt.⁴⁵

Then the Romanian ex-Communists declared themselves democrats; never forgetting the Stalinist lesson of getting the mob on their side in ample coercion actions, called *mineriades*. These are the last acts, as the historian can tell of, of witch hunting; in Dracula's country, yet, witches never die, but miraculously resurrect, out of their own ashes. So, as the witches were comfortably rediscovered and the people sent on a wild witch hunt, the old nomenclature was steadfastly privatizing national wealth, such theft proving⁴⁶ witch hunt of not only ideological nature, but economic, as well.

⁴⁴ Annie Kriegel, *Les Grands Procès dans les Pays communistes: La Pédagogie infernale*, Paris, Gallimard, 1972

⁴⁵ Mihai Dorin, *România de la comunism la mineriade*, ICR, Bucharest, 2006

⁴⁶ Tom Gallagher, *Furtul unei națiuni. România de la comunism încoace*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2004

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