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THE ARREST AND THE INVESTIGATION OF THE GROUP “RUGUL APRINS” (“THE BURNING BUSH”)

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Abstract

It is already a well-known reality, proven by the numerous volumes, studies and research approaches published after 1990 on this topic that the amplitude of the personalities that made up the group of Rugul Aprins (The Burning Bush) still arouses the interest of historians, theologians, sociologists or philologists. The present study aims to reconstruct as truthfully as possible the stage of the arrest of the 16 people who constituted the group „Teodorescu Alex. and others”, also known as the group of the Rugul Aprins, by corroborating the data from the documents in the Archive of the National Council for the Study of Security Archives with the information from the memorialistic literature, but also with the interview of two people who directly had this experience – Emanoil Mihăilescu and Nicolae Rădulescu. The memorialistic literature corroborated with the official documents (see A.C.N.S.A.S.) offers an impressive number of evidences of the fight against the Romanian Orthodox Church, the policy of compromising the Church subordinating itself increasingly diverse and treacherous means.

JEL Classification: I20, K49, Z12

INTRODUCTION

The period of 1958-1959 represented the last big wave of arrests, which affected a series of social categories, from peasants and workers to intellectuals and even Church servants. The withdrawal of Russian troops from our country coupled with the „Hungarian counter-revolution” led to these drastic preventive measures, meant to discourage any trace of resistance, hence the recourse to this new big wave, which again filled the prisons to the brim.

The preservation of power was the main objective and, in order to achieve it, the communist authorities used all the oppressive means – fear, terror, blackmail, beating, torture etc. – capable of brutally liquidating any resistance or opposition. The fear of conspiracies hovered even around them (a fact that went up to the strict surveillance, with the listening of phones even of the CC members and of prominent activists).

Basically, we are talking about an escalation of the persecution of the Romanian Orthodox Church during this period. The first level is reached in 1958 when the arrests of numerous clerics take place, so that in 1959 a finishing stroke is prepared – Decree 410 –, by which the monasteries are closed, and the nuns and monks that are not imprisoned come into the field of work, in factories and plants. Specifically, the communist regime provided for the mass exclusion of monks under 55 years and of nuns under 50 years „if they do not have ... theology or monastic school”. The effects were disastrous: about 5,000 monks, nuns, young brothers and sisters, were taken out of monasteries and forced to have their residence in their native villages, where they were obliged to fully enter the civil life and especially „the production” (although some of them had no connection with the secular world for decades), i.e. to get a job. They were forbidden to serve the holy ones, their actions being carefully and permanently supervised by the local police. In this situation, 62 monasteries and hermitages were abolished throughout the country, a large number of monasteries and hermitages were transformed into parish churches, some of them became museums or tourist places, and others were left even in disrepair, being destroyed and profaned. On March 31, 1960, 132 Orthodox monasteries were still operating, compared to 224 operating on January 1, 1959. Until October 28, 1959, during only 10 months, 30 other monastic settlements were abolished (Paul Caravia, 1998).

Predictably, the arrest of the „Teodorescu Alex. and others” also took place then, an arrest that was to be used as an example for others, who might have met the *spiritual audacity* demonstrated by the one who was recognized (even by the communist investigators) as the founder, organizer

and catalyst of the Rugul Aprins („The Burning Bush”).

The testimonies of the architects Emanoil Mihăilescu and Nicolae Rădulescu, who generously agreed to bring them into the public space, are true examples of the unimaginable abuses of the totalitarian regime, which had violated any logic of the common sense. Being trapped in a historical trap, the human being was reduced to imperative stereotypes, in which the only value was the communist ideology. The love of the fellow was translated within the communist logic in the hatred towards the bourgeois-landowner class, the contempt for the intellectuals and the discredit of the church faces, whose activity suffered from the „disease of mysticism” etc (Carmen Ciornea, 2015).

Reflecting on what did this spiritual movement mean, both for the protagonists and for the Communist securists, the confessor Emanoil Mihăilescu concluded: „The features that unite us all: the love for God, for the Orthodox faith, the love for this country! The priests felt that it was their duty to teach us, the young people, to love God, to seek God, and we can only do this by praying to God! And then, their modesty ... no one wanted to look like a star! Neither did Father Daniil! Here is the lousiness of the communists, because the Church was not legally abolished, but the clergy was being compromised by attracting priests as informants with missions, by infiltrating the agents among the parishioners, and many other dirty methods” (Carmen Ciornea, 2015).

THE ARREST OF THE GROUP „TEODORESCU ALEX. AND OTHERS”

According to the data provided by the Archive of the C.N.S.A.S., the Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered by Order no. 341/00210332 of January 9, 1957, the operative supervision of the Hieroschemamonk Daniil, who was „worked by the Suceava region on the basis of group informative action on the line of Service I of the Third Directorate, because, together with other elements, he seeks to attract into the hermitage young legionary elements, intellectuals with whom to actively fight against communism on the ideological field. For this purpose, they also aimed to create a reactionary philosophical circle” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 1, f. 35).

Throughout the whole year, the Securitatea (Security) intercepted the correspondence between Fathers Sofian Boghiu, Dumitru Staniloae, André Scrima and Professor Alexandru Mironescu. We would like to remind that Father André Scrima was already abroad and that, in the same year, following the meeting with the French journalist Olivier

Clemént, the latter published an article entitled „Romanian Orthodox Church or the miracle of the Rugul Aprins”, in which the Rugul Aprins appeared as a model of spiritual resistance movement in monasteries under the communist regime, being under the protection of Patriarch Justinian, the First Standing of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

As we already mentioned, all the data taken in these multiple ways led to the signing by the Minister of Internal Affairs Alexandru Drăghici of the *Report* „on proposals related to the arrest and investigation of 11 citizens from the group action Sandu Tudor, Roman Braga and Benedict Ghiuș”, of April 24, 1958 (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, ff. 2-13).

Father Adrian Făgețeanu was the first arrested on February 25, 1958, being one of the close apprentices of the Father Daniil Sandu Tudor, for the „counter-revolutionary activity” that he had carried out during his time as commissioner in Fălțiceni. His arrest by the Securitatea of Suceava took place at the Căldărușani monastery. Of course, through this arrest, the Securitatea’s organs also pursued to discover detailed information on the activities involving Father Daniil Sandu Tudor, the act having a premonitory function regarding the extent of the communist offensive on Romanian monasticism.

Thus, on the night of **June 13 to 14, 1958**, nine of those who will compose the group of the „Rugul Aprins” are arrested: **Father Daniil Sandu Tudor** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.013495, vol. 2, f. 170, f. 174), **Alexandru Mironescu** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 20202, vol. 6, f. 366) and his son, the student **Șerban Mironescu** (at the residence of Professor Alexandru Mironescu) (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 6, f. 220); then, the clerics **Benedict Ghiuș** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 7, f. 86), **Roman Braga** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 123), **Sofian Boghiu** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 20202, vol. 6, f. 324) and **Felix Dubneac** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 7, f. 239), **Arsenie Papacioc** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file nr.000202, vol. 7, f. 276) (at the Slatina monastery, following a large operation of the Securitatea’s troops at the monastic settlement) and the student **George Văsii** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 7, f. 1). Of course, the first person to be targeted was Father Daniil, the founder of the Rugul Aprins, who continued to polarize around him young people and intellectuals concerned with the matters related to Christian education. All clerics had attended the conferences at the Antim, with the exception of Father Arsenie Papacioc. Different faults were associated with this fault, depending on each subject. Thus, with regard to Father Benedict

Ghiuș, he also attracted the attention of the Securitatea’s organs because he was considered as one of the close ones of the Patriarch Justinian, (who had proposed him for the position of vicar bishop in 1949); also, Fathers Roman Braga (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, ff. 9-10) and Adrian Făgețeanu had been part of ATOS and had a legionary background (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 185002, vol. 1, *passim*); Father Felix Dubneac had given Father *Sofian Boghiu a notebook of poems written by Radu Gyr in prison, who, after reading it, gave it to Zamfiroiu Grigore* (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, f. 12). Father Arsenie Papacioc was, on the one hand, the disciple of the confessor Cleopa Ilie and, on the other hand, already had a legionary record from before 1945.

Regarding the moment of the arrest of the student George Văsii, it is restored by the confessor Nicolae Rădulescu who was at the Moldovița Monastery, together with a small group of colleagues, students of the Faculty of Architecture, where they worked on the church mapping. Thus, in the afternoon of June 13, 1958, „a few securists on a Jeep car arrived, asked who George Văsii is and took him with them” (Carmen Ciornea, 2015).

Two weeks later – on **July 29, 1958** – the students **Nicolae Rădulescu** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 7, f. 39) and **Dan Pistol** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 83) were also arrested. Why wasn’t Nicolae Rădulescu arrested on the same day with George Văsii? There was a confusion at the origin of this fact, proved by the fact that once he returned to Bucharest, Nicolae Rădulescu found out that a student of the Faculty of Architecture had been arrested, whose name was the same as his, Rădulescu, but who had no connection with them (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative Fund, File No. 211015, vol. 3, f. 12).

The following incarcerated, on the date of **August 5, 1958**, were the doctors **Gheorghe Dabija** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 273) and **Vasile Voiculescu** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 131), the frequent cultivation of the presence of Father Daniil, starting from the time of the Rugul Aprins at the Antim, constituting the main guilt. One month later (on **September 4, 1958**), the Father Professor **Dumitru Stăniloae** was arrested at his residence (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 165). The connection of the great theologian with this group was quite transparent, but the Security proceeded to it because the deprivation of his liberty rather constituted a means of attracting the attention of Patriarch Justinian regarding the consequences of opposition to the project of diminishing the monastic phenomenon (Adrian-Nicolae Petcu, 2015).

The last arrested, on **September 18, 1958**, was the

student **Emanoil Mihăilescu** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 311).

Thus, the plan of the Securitatea was fulfilled. The restoration of the moment of arrest by confessor Nicolae Rădulescu is likely to draw an affective map of the situation of the man in relation to the power games: „They waited for us at the Gara de Nord, and, on a car, we arrived at a headquarters of the Military Securitatea, my head resting on my knees, so as not to see where they were taking me. In the morning, people from the Uranus Street Securitatea came and took me. I don't remember what went through my mind and what I felt, I think I was resigned „like a lamb dumb in front of its shearers” (Carmen Ciornea, 2015).

THE INVESTIGATION

The message that was transmitted to those who came to be investigated was that from that moment they were framed into a human subspecies, being permanently terrorized and humiliated. The imagination of the torturers was extremely developed, hence the amazing diversity of the means used: opaque, iron sheet glasses, which they wore when they were taken to WC; day and night surveillance through the peephole (the detainees being unable to hear them as they approached, because they were wearing slippers over their boots); brutal, humiliating addressing; electric light – the light bulb above the door that was constantly turned on –; the norm of sleeping with hands out of the blanket, beatings, torture etc.

According to the testimonies of the two survivors, the dialogue between the investigator and the investigated defied all the rules of logic. The accused had to identify their own fault, which did not mean that the investigators were interested in finding out the truth but, on the contrary, the accused had to confess what the investigator was expecting from them, what he and his superiors obviously wanted. The answers recorded in the interrogation minutes were distorted and sounded according to the typical wooden language of the time, with typical phrases, easily found in most archival documents. The truth was twisted in terms of penalty and, in order to gather evidence, the investigators used a whole arsenal of coercive means: from swearing and threatening to beating that could take the most brutal forms (and the experience in the field was vast and varied).

Another method of *persuasion* that the investigators were calling for, especially in the case of difficult defendants, who had proved resistant to the means listed above, was confrontation. The investigator found the weaknesses of each and, in order to awaken the doubt, determined him to say what he was following, showing him the statements of other colleagues within the group, who had

acknowledged silly things, many of them being completely invented. In the case of the „Rugul Aprins” group, the investigators tried to overcome the resistance of the clerics by confronting them with the young students, being convinced that they, on the one hand, being inexperienced, would be much easier to intimidate and, on the other hand, that the monks, having pity on them, would give up in order to relieve them of pressure. Of course, through beatings and terror, they forced some to sign minutes in which very serious facts had been written, meant to support the prosecution's version. Throughout the confrontation, the protagonists were forbidden to look at each other and to talk to each other.

Father Daniil Sandu Tudor's attitude at the investigation proves, again, his position of *homo dignus*, as evidenced by the testimony of Mr. Emanoil Mihăilescu (Carmen Ciornea, 2015). Those who conducted the investigation, the Captain Enoiu Gheorghe and the Lieutenant Major Moldovan Iosif, seeing that they failed to intimidate him by the specific methods of physical and mental torture of the defendants, and that they could not pull out anything from Father Daniil, they brought an informant into his cell and advised the investigators of the Rugul Aprins group to make some confrontations.

Following the abusive treatments, George Văsii, professor Alexandru Mironescu and his son Șerban had previously signed a series of interrogation minutes containing, predictably, the *truth* of the investigator. Only in these circumstances, Father Daniil, out of compassion for the above-mentioned three (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 430), in order to relieve them of beating, acknowledged that he would have been making hostile comments regarding the RPR regime and that he would have urged young students not to participate in communist propaganda activities (George Enache, 2002). From the testimonies of the investigated, there also emerges the dimension of a hardened fighter of the dialectical materialism, a philosophical conception of Marxism-Lenism. Both Father Roman Braga (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 278) and Father Adrian Făgețeanu (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 101) acknowledge that, together with Father Daniil, they defied the communist ideology and the Marxist biology. Moreover, Father Daniil Sandu Tudor, as a representative of the interwar generation that had claimed as a its constituent element the „new spirituality”, did nothing but maintain this conception of the organization of existence in the spirit of the dogmas of the church, even if, in the present context, this was translated into a disregard of the doctrine of the totalitarian communist state.

As for the presence of the informant in the Father Daniil's cell, this indicates that the investigators wanted, at any cost, to collect evidence in order to justify their sentence. The corroboration of the data provided by the informant with certain elements that constitute the biography of Virginia Gheorghiu is likely to elucidate some aspects. According to the documents (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, ff.430-431), **Father Daniil believed that one of the reasons for his arrest could be that his ex-wife, who was then (in 1958) in Paris, proposed to make an anthology of Romanian literature, together with Ciorănescu, and to list some of his writings among the works they needed for this purpose** (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, ff. 430-431). As they were not available, Virginia Gheorghiu would have written to her „sister from Bucharest” to procure them from him and to send them to her. It is true that the informant stated these facts, specifying that he did not know with certainty the source of this information, i.e. he did not know whether Father Daniil knew this from the former sister-in-law or from someone else.

Paradoxically, the moral dimension of Father Daniil is confirmed even by the statements of the informant, who was introduced into the cell by those who conducted the investigation, and whose role was obviously to collect data in order to justify the conviction. But within about a month, during which time he fulfilled his function and wrote down with exactitude all the information about Father Daniil, something happened in the soul of the informant, because, reading between the lines, we began to believe that he had come to admiring him, since the outlined portrait certified the intellectual and moral probity of the subject of his description: „The cries he heard on Monday evening impressed him and, after he was quiet, he began to explain to me that those who go through such tests prove cowardice till the end, acknowledging everything, in order to escape physical pain. They have no spiritual background, not knowing God and all the mysteries of the Christian faith. If they knew them, they would pray with trust to the God in these difficult moments, and he would give them the power necessary to endure the momentary physical pain, sparing them from future remorse. Even if he was to pass this test, which he does not believe that is possible, he would be ready to receive the mockery of the beating, even at the risk of destroying his „carrion”. It doesn't matter to him. He may receive death in exchange for the triumph of the truth that he is preaching. That would mean his salvation. The body dies but the soul goes to the kingdom of God, where the eternal life is” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 431).

INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS

Due to the lack of evidence, the investigators also added to the file a number of articles from the newspaper “Credința” (“Faith”) that testified, in their view, “the fight against the democratic-popular regime of the RPR”. It seems that these data were sufficient to qualify him for a “crime of conspiracy against the state” and to give him no more or less than 25 years of detention. Of course, in order to make the case sustainable, the activity of the whole group was interpreted as legionary.

The students were asked to declare the “hostile activity” that they carried out against the State. The corroboration of the interrogation and confrontation minutes with the testimonies of Mr. Nicolae Rădulescu and Emanoil Mihăilescu highlights a few lines of the investigation in the case of the young people of the group, namely, establishing that they would have listened to foreign radio stations, that they would have favorably commented on the Counter-Revolution in Hungary and that from the autumn of 1956, under the influence of Father Daniil – who was fighting against the materialistic conception (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 2, f. 200), wishing to transform them into so-called intellectuals of the future, with an “internal technique” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file 000202, *passim*), – they were subtracted from the social-political life of a man and from the thing learned in the faculty, in the spirit of the analytical program, all of it summing up the activities contrary to the regime in RPR (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, ff. 5-6).

Of course, the interrogation minutes often attract attention through the ideational void, a direct consequence of the “totalitarian footprint” of the wooden discourse, broken by the reality. The totalitarian reasoning forced the investigator to record formulas that could be parodied, because, often, it was impossible to clarify the “hostile” (to the democratic-popular regime in the RPR) aspects of the debates on religious topics (Carmen Ciornea, 2015).

It is important to note that the devastating impact on the destinies of those who made up the group “Teodorescu Alex. and others” was not limited to the amount of the punishment. Even after the release – which in the case of Father Daniil took the form of the passage to the eternal life – they were followed by the Securitatea and their future was definitively jeopardized by the status of former political prisoners (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 416583, ff. 33-34).

NOTES

- [1] Caravia, Pavel, Constantinescu, Virgiliu and Stănescu, Flori (1998). *Biserica întemnițată. România 1944-1989* [The imprisoned Church. Romania 1944-1989]. National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, Bucharest; Enache, George (2005). *Ortodoxie și putere politică în România contemporană* [Orthodoxy and political power in contemporary Romania]. Bucharest: Nemira, *passim*.
- [2] Ciornea, Carmen (2015). Interviu cu domnul Nicolae Rădulescu [Interview with Mr. Nicolae Rădulescu], Nicolae Rădulescu și Dosarele Securității [Nicolae Rădulescu and the Security Files], Interviu cu domnul Emanoil Mihăilescu [Interview with Mr. Emanoil Mihăilescu], Emanoil Mihăilescu și Dosarele Securității [Emanoil Mihăilescu and the Security Files], Autobiografia domnului Emanoil Mihăilescu [The Autobiography of Mr. Emanoil Mihăilescu]. In Ciornea, Carmen, *Chipul Rugului Aprins* [The Image of the Rugul Aprins] (pp. 21-230). Bucharest: Ed. Eikon.
- [3] Ciornea, Carmen (2015). *Chipul Rugului Aprins* [The Image of the Rugul Aprins]. Bucharest: Ed. Eikon, pp. 169-170.
- [4] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 1, f. 35.
- [5] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, ff. 2-13.
- [6] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal Fund, File No.013495, Vol. 2, Vol. 170, Vol. 174.
- [7] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 366.
- [8] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 220.
- [9] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 7, f. 86.
- [10] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 123.
- [11] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 324.
- [12] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 7, f. 239.
- [13] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 7, f. 276.
- [14] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 7, f. 1.
- [15] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, ff. 9-10: The 12-page report “on proposals related to the arrest and investigation of 11 citizens from the group action Sandu Tudor, Roman Braga and Benedict Ghiuș” of April 24, 1958, signed by the head of Serv. 2 of the Independent service, Major of Security Borșan D-tru; the Head of Service IV, Major of Security Sican Dumitru and approved by the Head of the Independent Serv. Lt. Col. of Security Em. Rusu and the Head of the Third Directorate, Lt. Col. of Security N. Budișteanu, presents the proposal of arrest of the Father Roman Braga as follows: „Roman Braga, born on April 12, 1922, in Cernăuți, the son of Cosma and Maria, Bachelor of Theology, currently a deacon priest at the Metropolitanate of Iași. He is a legionary since 1940 and has worked in the FDC unit of the Cernica Monastic Seminary. After August 23, 1944, he continued his legionary activity within the legionary group of the theology faculty in Bucharest, for which he was sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, being released in 1953. He is guilty of a hostile activity among the students of some faculties in Iași. Thus, he attracted the students Truscă Mihai, Ghindoc C. and Darăscu Ioan, to whom he gives a mystical-nationalist education in his cell at the Metropolitanate, and urges them not to participate in the political manifestations of the faculty. Roman Braga took part in the cycle of philosophical-nationalist conferences at Rarău in August 1957 and participated in the education of the group of students from Bucharest, who came to the hermitage. He has a close connection with the legionary monks from the Slatina monastery, whose activity he is aware of”.
- [16] A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 185002, vol. 1, *passim*.
- [17] See the proposal of arrest of the Father Felix Dubneac, included in the *Report* of April 24, 1958 “on proposals related to the arrest and investigation of 11 citizens from the group action Sandu Tudor, Roman Braga and Benedict Ghiuș”: „Felix Dubneac, legionary, monk priest at the Plumbuita monastery in Bucharest. He lives in the monastery. He is a church painter. The aforementioned received a notebook of legionary poems from Zamfiroiu (arrested). The purpose for which he requested these poems from Zamfiroiu is not known” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, f. 12 and A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 002214, vol. 1, f. 466).
- [18] Ciornea, Carmen (2015). *Chipul Rugului Aprins* [The Image of the Rugul Aprins]. Bucharest: Ed. Eikon, pp. 33-34.
- [19] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 7, f. 39.
- [20] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 83.
- [21] The proposal of arrest of Nicolae Rădulescu contains the same confusion regarding the first name and address: „Rădulescu Gabriel, domiciled in Bucharest, Bd. 1 Mai, no. 134, 4th year student at the Faculty of Architecture. He is part of the above-mentioned group [Văsii Gheorghe, Mironescu Alexandru, Pistol Grigore Dan] and took part in all the meetings” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative Fund, File no. 211015, vol. 3, f. 12) [subl. C.C.].

- [22] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 273.
- [23] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 131.
- [24] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 165.
- [25] In this regard, at the end of August 1958 a meeting had already taken place between Dumitru Dogaru, the General Secretary of the Department of Cults, and Patriarch Justinian. For a broad treatment of the subject see Petcu, Adrian Nicolae (2015). *Monahismul românesc la începutul regimului «democrat-popular»* [The Romanian Monasticism at the Beginning of the „Democratic-Popular” Regime] (XLI). *Lumina*, July 1, 2015.
- [26] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no.000202, vol. 6, f. 311.
- [27] Ciornea, Carmen (2015). *Chipul Rugului Aprins [The Image of the Rugul Aprins]*. Bucharest: Ed. Eikon, p.35.
- [28] Ciornea, Carmen (2015). *Chipul Rugului Aprins [The Image of the Rugul Aprins]*. Bucharest: Ed. Eikon, pp. 134-135: „I saw him! His cell was close to mine, at the inquest, at Malmaison where I was investigated, and then I was taken to Uranus. And, at one point, the cell opens and I hear: „Come on, popo!” – Father Daniil was called out to throw his glasses. When the door was opening – and you were not alone in the cell, that it was not just a personal studio, there were 3-4 inmates – when all the locks were heard, you had to get up and stand with your face at the window, and with your back to the door. And this one, the cop, was calling one, the other, to the investigation. The only quiet days, when these noises were not heard, were the Sundays. In the rest you could hear: tanc-panc, this sinister song of the locks, and you lived in a constant pressure. And, as I said, I heard the cop as he called him, but also the reply of the Father, full of dignity: „Do you not know how to respect an old man, boy? Is that how you address an old man ?!” The Father had a crazy courage. He knew what to expect. He knew what was going to happen in Romania”.
- [29] The notes signed by the informant that was introduced into Father Daniil’s cell are such as to provide conclusive data in this regard: „He is thinking with horror of the misfortune that has befallen the family of Professor Alex. Mironescu – his host – and especially of his boy who graduates the faculty this year, a young man in whom he has put his trust and whose career would be failed if he is also arrested. He has an emotional nature that he seeks to overcome by will” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 430).
- [30] Enache, George (2002). Daniil Sandu Tudor. Pagini din dosarul de anchetă 113668 [Daniil Sandu Tudor. Pages from the investigation file 113668]. In *CNSAS, Arhivele Securității*, vol. 1. Bucharest: Pro Historia.
- [31] See the interrogation minutes of June 27, 1958, beginning at 7.30 and ending at 13.45, signed by Father Roman Braga: „The activity carried out by me during the period 1953-1958 is really hostile to the current regime, though I did not give it a legionary form, but a spiritual one, i.e. anti-materialistic, pursuing the same purpose, that is, removing as many elements as possible, especially among the young students from the current regime and grouping them into monasteries. [...] I wrote notes, summaries and anti-materialistic comments on Marxist biology and other topics [...] Absolutely on every occasion, I especially urged young people to visit the monasteries, with the conviction that an approach to historical monuments will make them anti-materialists, will remove them from the regime” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 278).
- [32] See the interrogation minutes of March 12, 1958, starting at 8.00 and ending at 13.00, signed by Father Adrian Făgețeanu: „Sandu Tudor told me that in order to continue the struggle against the materialistic conception, the methods used by the legionary movement on the organizational level are no longer worthwhile, and the only possibility to fight against materialistic conceptions is the religious one, and within the church the best preparation for such a fight can be done in monasticism” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 1, f. 101).
- [33] The statements of the informant that was introduced into the cell are edifying with regard to the hidden side of the investigation conducted on Father Daniil Sandu Tudor. On the other hand, these Informative Notes also demonstrate the robustness of Father Daniil’s moral constitution, which refused any compromise in front of the investigators: „He is very outraged because he observed – he says – at the last investigation that there are no good reasons to justify his arrest. He is asked to talk about his subversive activity, and when he asks to tell him what is this about, he is told that he will be unmasked in time, but until then he should talk about it himself. This leads him to believe that there is no serious evidence against him and that you are now trying to get something out. He will not admit any frame-up and even if he would be convicted, he hopes to escape alive and he knows how to proceed to hold you accountable for the injustice done to him. It goes so far that everyone who comes to him to be confessed and guided on the path of truth, is considered to be part of a counter-revolutionary organization whose header he is. He cannot imagine how his investigator, though a young man, allows himself to insult and threaten him. He is merciful to him because he is a stray person who has sold his soul and conscience. Too bad for him because he seems to be a smart man. He is pleased, however, that by his behavior and attitude, he has imposed on this investigator the proper suitability in front of him. For the future, he established a line of conduct that would oblige the

investigator to give him the proper respect as to a representative of the church. In no case will he admit to be trampled and mocked. If you intend to sentence him at any price, you should tell him this beautifully and he would sign whatever you would ask. He can live his life of anchoritism and confession of the Lord in prison as well. Loneliness does not frighten him. Under no circumstances will he accept to fire other people. He would agree with whatever is required of him personally. [...]” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, ff. 430-431)

- [34] The same informant noted the following „His opinion is that the reasons for his arrest may be due to the following facts: He has a „disciple” (as he calls him without telling me his name) [it is about André Scrima] who went to Paris. He began to publish some articles in the French press, in which he also talks about him. The way he presents him would truly mean some danger to him at this time. **Secondly, his ex-wife is also in Paris and, together with Professor Ciorănescu from Sorbona (I do not know if it is not Emil Cioran because he named him Ciorănescu), she decided to make an anthology of Romanian literature. Among the works they need for this purpose, there are listed some of his works. As they are not available, his ex-wife wrote to her sister from Bucharest to procure them from him and send them to her. I don’t remember exactly if he knows this from his former sister-in-law (whom he probably met), or someone else told him.** It could happen – he says – that these facts have reached your ears, even possessing those articles” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, ff. 430-431) [subl. CC].
- [35] A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 6, f. 431.
- [36] In the interrogation minutes of June 28, 1958, starting at 8.00 am and ending at 2.00 pm, signed by George Văsiu, the following is stated: „I noticed that he, through his statements, was trying to combat materialism. Thus, he showed that the matter is the creation of the divine spirit, that life is not due to the process of the matter development, but that the man is created by God. Seeking to combat the materialistic conception, he showed that it does not help for spiritual development, that it leads to templateism, which would not happen if one would consider that mind, thinking is not the product of the developed matter but a gift from God” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Criminal fund, file no. 000202, vol. 2, f. 200).
- [37] The resumption of the obsessive theme of the danger represented by “manipulative priests” who educated young people “against the democratic-popular regime”.
- [38] The data recorded in the interrogation minutes are, in general, a resumption of the data recorded in the 12-page report “on proposals related to the arrest and investigation of 11 citizens from the group action Sandu Tudor, Roman Braga and Benedict Ghiuș” of April 24, 1958: “Lately, the aspect of indoctrination has become increasingly evident. Thus, on March 15 of the current year [1958], the agent “Marcel Troian” of the Service IV, points out that the group of students consisting of Văsiu Gheorghe, Nae Rădulescu, Șerban Mironescu, Pistol Dan and others, continues to meet regularly in the house of Professor Alex. Mironescu or at the Plumbuita monastery. During the last meetings, Sandu Tudor “shook the students because they are overwhelmed by the program, by the projects for institutes, by the meetings, etc., ignoring the truly precious things – prayers and other spiritual concerns”. He also “reprimanded” the students because “they are devoid of enthusiasm, that their soul life is devoid of horizons because of materialistic ideas” and urged them to be more courageous, to “break the handcuffs that keep them bound today, to raise their forehead and to feel their blood of Romanians and Christians” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 211015, vol. 3, ff. 5-6).
- [39] See the interrogation minutes of Nicolae Rădulescu and Emanoil Mihăilescu in Ciornea, Carmen (2015). *Chipul Rugului Aprins [The Image of the Rugul Aprins]*. Bucharest: Ed. Eikon, pp. 61-98 and pp. 173-198.
- [40] The *Informative note* of 5.11.1977, signed by the agent “Pandele”, who was following Șerban Mironescu, illustrates the tragic fate of these people whose lives were distorted: “Although the Academy Library was in great need of him, being a specialist in decimal rankings, however, he was rejected from the list of people who had to be received on the basis that “those who have left the Library at hard times, have no more to do with it”. At the core, the words of the director Gabriel Ștrempel referred to something else, namely that he has a heavy file, that he was closed and that he would be a reactionary. Many people were outraged by this attitude, especially as he sought to help the Library when he was not her employee. All the employees of the “classifications” and “cataloging” Services protested against this decision, but everyone was told that he has a heavy file, attracting the attention not to intervene for such a man. Everyone who heard about it withdrew, especially since it was said that it was for political reasons, considering that there was some additional evidence, so they no longer insisted, due to the fear of becoming suspicious. As for him, little has been exaggerated, because if the prohibition of his entry into the services of the Library finds its explanation, however, everyone is forbidden to come in contact with Ș.M. [Șerban Mironescu], even at the former buffet or in the courtyard of the Library, the persons concerned in this posture suffering some unnecessary observations and apostrophizing. According to many people, it is a shame that a foreign language specialist is not used to the best of his ability. Many researchers have turned to him for translations, among which I would list Mihai Ștefănescu, Corneliu Dima-Drăgan, Remus Niculescu. Under the leadership of Constantin Noica and Eugen Barbu he translated Plato, being highly appreciated by

Latinists such as Creția, Cizek or Prof. Elian. Many of the writers know this man, but he keeps in touch with them as they are older people with different conceptions. Currently, he lives with his mother on the Galați Street. Since the death of his father, he is no longer visited by people who have previously held privileged positions. While working at the Academy Library, Ș.M. [ȘERBAN MIRONESCU] was not visited by persons outside the institution and did not maintain relations with foreign citizens. I know that he was in good relations, while his father was living, with the family of the writer Panait Istrati, established in France. Ș.M. [ȘERBAN MIRONESCU] could work a lot, could write and translate having style, but he is a comfortable, slow man. This state of work was also influenced, to some extent, by the delay of the establishment of a family, which may have caused him to be more active. Currently, outside the work schedule, Ș.M. [ȘERBAN MIRONESCU] takes care of his car, bought about 7 years ago, an old Volkswagen, which he always repairs. In general, he has a silent nature, and does not get involved in political comments, avoiding discussions on this topic, perhaps even due to an exaggerated prudence” (A.C.N.S.A.S., Informative fund, file no. 416583, ff. 33-34).