

## THE ROMANIAN REVOLUTION OF DECEMBER 1989

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**Rezumat<sup>1</sup>.** *1989 fost un an revoluționar în istoria Europei. Atunci, regimurile socialist-totalitare (comuniste) din centrul și estul continentului s-au prăbușit, rând pe rând. Mai întâi în Polonia, apoi în Ungaria, Germania Răsăriteană, Cehoslovacia, Bulgaria, România. Dărâmarea zidului Berlinului, la 9 noiembrie 1989, a marcat începutul reunificării Europei. Dacă în celelalte state revoluția română a avut o desfășurare pașnică, în România, înlăturarea regimului Ceaușescu s-a realizat pe cale violentă, fiind înregistrate peste 1 000 de victime. În același timp, revoluția română a avut un caracter radical, nemaitrecând printr-o etapă de glasnosti și perestroika (reformele inițiate de liderul sovietic Mihail Gorbaciov).*

**Abstract.** *1989 was a revolutionary year in European history. Then, the socialist-totalitarian regimes (communist) in central and eastern continent collapsed, one by one. First in Poland, then in Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania. The demolition of the Berlin Wall in November 9th 1989 marked the beginning of the reunification of Europe. If the other countries in the Romanian revolution was a peaceful way, in Romania, the Ceaușescu regime removal was achieved by violence, with over 1 000 people killed. Meanwhile, the Romanian revolution proceeded radically, without passing through a phase of glasnosti and perestroika (reforms initiated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev).*

**Keywords:** communism, socialist-totalitarian, revolution, repression, television, radio, program, leaders, democracy.

### BUCHAREST, DECEMBER 21 – 22

On the morning of December 21, the Executive Political Committee (CPEX) included on the agenda of its meeting the measures to be taken for restoring order, as well as a set of promises meant to win the people's acceptance. These measures were supposed to be brought to the attention of the participants to the meeting in the Piața Palatului (The Palace Square). As usual on such occasions, people had been brought to the location several hours before, placed according to the pre-established plan with Nicolae Ceaușescu and Elena Ceaușescu's portraits with the flags of the Socialist Republic of Romania and of the Romanian Communist Party with placards on which you could read the following slogans: "Condamnăm cu fermitate trădătorii și vânzătorii de țară!" (we firmly condemn traitors and country sellers), "Să înceteze manifestările șoviniste ale cercurilor străine!" (let put an end to chauvinist manifestations of foreign

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circles), “România a ales/socialism, pace, progres (Romania has chosen socialism, peace, progress), “Trăiască unitatea de nezdruccinat a întregului nostru popor în jurul partidului, al secretarului său general, tovarășul Nicolae Ceaușescu” (Long live the unshakable unity of our people around the party, around our general secretary, comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu), “Stima noastră și mândria, Ceaușescu - România!” (Our esteem and pride, Ceaușescu - Romania).

The meeting started at 12:00 p.m. when Nicolae Ceaușescu appeared on the balcony of the Central Committee building accompanied by the members of the CPEx to demonstrate that the whole leadership was united. As usual, when the general secretary was present at a meeting, the manifestation was broadcast live on radio and television. The meeting was opened by Barbu Petrescu, first – secretary of the Municipal party committee, then some representatives from enterprises in Bucharest who “condemned” the “hooligans” in Timișoara, expressing their determination to defend socialist Romania’s independence and sovereignty, to fulfill the tasks drawn up at the XIV<sup>th</sup> Congress of RCP and the general secretary injunctions. Then Nicolae Ceaușescu took the floor and reiterated the accusations of revisionist, imperialist circles expressing his determination to put an end to the illegal activities in Timișoara, to restore order and to ensure the victorious construction of socialism in Romania.

During his speech there could be heard a sudden noise like a firecracker, followed by a wheeze coming from the sound system which created panic among the participants; according to some variants, several women had been stung with wooden spikes and they started to scream. Clearly, in a state of confusion and fear the participants—especially those in the front rows—dropped the portraits, the placards and the flags, trying to duck down against possible hits. It was an essential psychological moment: those present had the sensation that they would be attacked there in the Piata Palatului, they did not know by whom but they that feeling of fear.

Nicolae Ceaușescu had to interrupt his speech, amazed by the panicking crowds. In order to be heard he had to address the people several times with “Alo, alo” (hello, hello) and to ask them “Așezați-vă liniștiți la locurile voastre” (sit calmly in your places). Elena Ceaușescu intervened several times, repeating the same words. Their attempt to restore order had a partial effect. Nicolae Ceaușescu resumed his speech, hastily announcing the measures for the increase of the population living standard starting with January 1, 1990: minimum salary raise with 200 lei, with 100 lei for pensions, 300 lei social aid and 30–50 lei for

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children state allowance, birth allowance worth 1,000-2,000<sup>2</sup> lei after which he withdrew from the balcony without waiting for the usual cheers and ovations.

The effect of the meeting dispersing was devastating for Nicolae Ceaușescu. Romania's population saw and heard the moment when the speech was interrupted, the desperate appeal of the two leaders to restore order. Ceaușescu could no longer control the situation and his statue was about to fall from the pedestal. Soon after the meeting, Piața Palatului (Palace Square) was evacuated, portraits, flags and placards being cleared away. A part of the demonstrators stayed in the streets, in the Piața Universității (University Square) area—Hotel Intercontinental - Piața Romană (Romană Square)<sup>3</sup>. Towards the evening, the centre of the capital was occupied by some tens of thousands of people who scanned “Timișoara! Timișoara! Jos asasinul! Libertate! Libertate!” (Timișoara, Timișoara, down with the assassin! Freedom! Freedom!).

In fact, what happened in Piața Palatului (Palace Square) in Bucharest was similar to what had happened in the Central Square in Prague, some weeks before. Similarly, it had been a melee which generated panic, a major event witnessed by a large number of people, exceptional media coverage on an international level. The Domino Theory started to work in Bucharest as well.

The interruption of the meeting was the sensational news of international media over the second half of December 21. As the meeting was broadcast live on the Romanian television, images could be recorded with the moment when Ceaușescu was interrupted and the crowds started to panic. Feeling that something important was going to happen in Romania, numerous foreign journalists who had come to Bucharest to take part in the XIV party congress postponed their departure, most of them staying in the Intercontinental Hotel in the rooms facing the Piața Universității (University Square).

From the steps leading to the underground station and from the fountain square in front of the Architecture Institute unknown people such as Dan Iosif and Dumitru Dincă addressed the crowds. Almost all speeches concluded with the following: “Nu vă fie frică, Ceaușescu pică!” (don't be afraid, Ceaușescu will fall).

In front of the Universitate building there was a group of revolutionaries coming from Timișoara who waved the national flag with the Socialist Republic of Romania coat of arms torn out of its centre.

Police carrying riot shields were called up but, as they were few and untrained as to what they had to do, were quickly annihilated eventually watching

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the crowds as spectators. Truckfuls of workers in patriotic guards uniforms were sent in, elbowing their way through the crowds without stopping. When trucks appeared, the demonstrators whistled and booed, when they went away the crowds applauded and cheered. Army APCs were summoned, some of them being forced to stop as the people refused to make way. The revolutionaries were confronted by soldiers and the first casualties were registered in front of Sala Dalles (Dalles Hall).

On December 21, demonstrations in front of Romania's embassies continued with more intensity, as compared to the previous days. In Beograd, at 1:45 p.m. a meeting took place – according to the ambassador's words - with almost 500 – 600 people carrying placards condemning the regime in Bucharest and lighting candles in the memory of the victims of Timișoara<sup>4</sup>. On the evening of December 21, the Romanian ambassador transmitted that “the following adopted anti-Romanian attitudes and positions in connection to the recent events in Timișoara”: the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia presidium, the Serbian Communist Union presidium, the Socialist Youth Union of Yugoslavia, the Students' Union in Beograd, The Veterans' Association<sup>5</sup>.

On the evening of December 21, a new demonstration took place in front of Romania's embassy in Paris where two ministers and several MPs were present requiring to be received by the Romanian ambassador to get clarification regarding the events in Romania. They were answered the ambassador could not receive them, as opening hours had passed; they should come during opening hours or the ambassador would meet them at the respective ministries. The two ministers left but after a short while a group of deputies arrived wearing French flag rosettes on their chest, together with TV cameramen and a group of demonstrators to be received by the ambassador or a Romanian diplomat in order to get an interview on that afternoon events in Bucharest. They were offered the same answer as the two ministers before them. Relating the latest events to Bucharest, Ambassador Petre Gigea asked for “urgent suggestions regarding the attitude to be adopted in such situations<sup>6</sup>”

The official positions which condemned the Bucharest regime multiplied. The Czechoslovakian ministry of foreign affairs released a communicate to “express their worry and strong protest against the use of army and law enforcement forces to disperse the demonstrators” The Political Bureau of CC of the Polish United Workers' Party manifested “its regret in connection to the events in Romania”. The Polish parliament unanimously adopted a motion to

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condemn “the Romanian authorities’ repression” against the peaceful demonstrators and expressed its solidarity with the latter<sup>7</sup>. The Commission for Foreign Policy of the Bulgarian People’s Assembly voted a declaration in which they expressed the people’s deep concern for the “disturbances” in Timișoara and other cities, which led to confrontation with the army, resulting in “casualties<sup>8</sup>”.

The Soviet government kept a significantly reserved position not to be accused of interfering in Romania’s internal affairs. On the morning of December 21, ambassador Ion Bucur required a meeting with Aboimov to whom he presented a Russian version of Ceaușescu’s speech, delivered on radio and television, to be used for the notification of the Soviet leadership and media regarding the events in Romania. Asked if there had been victims in Timișoara, the ambassador stated he had no information on the issue. When referring to Ceaușescu’s statements of the previous night, regarding the Soviet interference in the internal affairs of Romania, Aboimov wanted to underline the fact that such assertions “cannot but amaze us as they are unfounded and unrealistic” as the Soviet Union “builds its relations with the allied socialist countries on the basis of equality, mutual respect and complete non-interference in internal affairs”<sup>9</sup>. The Soviet media was prudent enough, avoiding to publish analysis articles, limiting itself to quoting news coming from Prague, Sofia, Warsaw, Vienna, Washington, Tokyo, Paris, London, Habana as well as from the Romanian News Agency (Agerpres). Thus, Soviet citizens were informed that in Romania there was a difficult situation about which the authorities in Bucharest kept their silence. Speaking in front of the USSR Supreme Soviet Mikhail Gorbachev stated: “As regards the events in Romania, some deputies, especially the ones in Moldova, insist that we, in the Congress should react. In order to react, we need reliable information so that we adopt a fair position, we judge the situation correctly. I entrusted Tiajelnikov, the USSR ambassador to Romania to address the Romania leadership with the request of offering us the necessary information. I invited Romania’s ambassador to the ministry of foreign affairs to pose the same questions and to get the information. For the moment, the information we have from Bucharest and the one supplied by Romania’s ambassador does not allow us to have a reliable image about what happens in the country. You know that the foreign press describes the situation in the country in a dramatic way”<sup>10</sup>. The Moldova deputy Ion Hadarca replied saying he was expecting “more concrete news, communicates possibly” which could clarify the situation. He appreciated that the personality cult policy was continued in Romania but that “what had

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happened in Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia was inevitable for Romania as well". Considering that the Moldova deputy was off limits, Gorbachev interrupted him: „We should not overstep the limits, keep out of what might seem like interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state”<sup>11</sup>. After the meeting was interrupted, Nicolae Ceaușescu and Elena Ceaușescu stayed in the Central Committee building where they were informed about the evolution of the internal and international situation.

They were mostly interested in the US army intervention in Panama as well as the development of the Congress of the USSR People’s Deputies. Ceaușescu was convinced there was an understanding between Bush and Gorbachev regarding the change of the political regime in Romania. Information coming from the country said that the revolt had spread all over Banat and a large part of Transylvania. In Arad, Lugoj, Cugir, Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Brasov, Tg. Mures, Caransebes, Alba Iulia, Miercurea Ciuc, Oradea, Zalau, Baia Mare, Bistrita, Resita, Cisnadia and in other localities the population went out in the streets, scanning for „Libertate” (freedom), „Jos dictatura” (down with the dictatorship), „ Jos Ceaușescu” (down with Ceaușescu). What worried him most were the centre of Bucharest occupation and the incapacity of the order enforcement authorities to disperse the crowds.

Unlike other communist leaders who eventually understood they had to hand over power, Nicolae Ceaușescu was determined to fight “to save socialism”, being convinced that if socialism was abandoned, Romania would experience a real national catastrophe. According to some information, after “the meeting’s break up” Ceaușescu summoned Vasile Milea, Tudor Postelnicu and Iulian Vlad announcing them that he had decided to take over the command of the order enforcement forces: “We will defend the cause, we will defend socialist arm in hand, as we are in a war more difficult than the one against Hitler. So, this is a state of war not of emergency. The army, the interior, the Securitate should do their duty”.<sup>12</sup>

On the evening of December 21, at 6:00 p.m. Nicolae Ceaușescu’s last video-conference took place. From the very beginning he stated: „I want to refer to some issues which have come about and which demonstrate that we deal with an organized action, with a precise target of destabilization and aimed at the integrity and independence of Romania. I don’t have the slightest doubt about it.” As a consequence, they had to take energetic measures, to defend socialist and Romania’s sovereignty. He appreciated that “it was necessary to decree the

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general mobilization for the whole party and state officials and of all our interior forces – militia, Securitate – including the military units [..]. We should go to enterprises and discuss there, even in the factories where there are problems. We must organize defense units in enterprises. We have to clearly discuss with the whole party. This is the moment to prove one's party member capacity”.

He required the mobilization of the Communist Youth Union members, of women's organizations as there is only one way – fight. We must make people understand, people who have been tricked and are tricked by foreign groups and secret services, but we have to speak openly and to isolate these groups, which should be exposed [...] we should ensure order, dismantle this conspiracy, ensure peace and order, the development of socialist, Romania's independence and integrity.”<sup>13</sup>

Nicolae Ceaușescu was determined not to give power away, being convinced that he could overcome these difficult moments. In the Central Committee headquarters a huge quantity of armament and ammunition was brought, so that – according to general Iulian Vlad's opinion – “they could have held out for one month” any assault by the demonstrators<sup>14</sup>.

After the end of the video-conference there was a discussion with a limited number of people among whom Elena Ceaușescu, Manea Manescu, Emil Bobu, Silviu Curticeanu, Vasile Milea, Tudor Postelnicu, Iulian Vlad, a.s.o; Nicolae Ceaușescu appreciated that „the activity at the top is uncoordinated,I mean the relations between the army, the ministry of the interior units,the securitate, including what I was told that the firefighters' units refused to act, pretending it was not their call. In fact, this is why things go slowly, without being sorted out in time. It is in fact inadmissible that for over 4 or 5 hours this group at Universitate has not been eliminated, it should have been eliminated for long”<sup>15</sup>

As a result, Ceaușescu decided to set up a joined command, ensured by the minister of National Defense, the minister of the interior, the minister secretary of state in the Department for the State Security and the head of the General Staff of Patriotic Guards”;

The secretariat of this commandment was ensured by Silviu Curticeanu and the general leadership by Nicolae Ceaușescu. Reality proved that this Commandment had no clear leading rules, according to well-known military regulations thus it could not act as an efficient body.

Although it started to get dark, the crowds did not leave the location; they had occupied the central area of Bucharest and were scanning slogans against the

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regime: „ Jos dictatura!” ( down with the dictatorship), „Jos asasinii!” ( down with the assassins), „ Jos Ceaușescu” ( down with Ceaușescu), „ Jos tiranul!” ( down with the tyrant), „ Nu plecăm, nu plecăm” (we won’t leave, we won’t leave), „Noi vrem ca sa murim!” (we want to die), „ Timișoara, Timișoara”, „Libertate! Libertate!” (freedom, freedom) „ Fara violenta”( without any violence). During those decisive moments, no important person came to Piata Universității (University Square). The television channel and the radio station broadcast patriotic songs, Nicolae Ceaușescu’s speech without the moment of its interruption, reports about „the unshakable unity” of the whole people supporting the general secretary, about the inspired work to achieve the XIV<sup>th</sup> Party Congress decisions. Romanians were fed up with such programs and preferred to watch foreign channels (Sofia, Beograd, Budapest, and Kishinev) or to listen to „Radio Free Europe” and „the Voice of America” which related extensively about the events in Romania.

At about 11:00 p.m. in the Universitate area and Intercontinental shots could be heard; there were used multi-colored tracers to intimidate the crowds. Expecting an intervention in force on the part of militia and the army, the participants to the demonstration – among whom Dan Iosif and Petre Roman, lecturer at the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest – built a barricade in the Batistei street area, across the Intercontinental Hotel. They used tables, garbage cans, chairs brought from “Dunărea” restaurant, boards and other materials which could be an obstacle for the APCs. The barricade was destroyed by two tanks immediately after midnight. Then repression started, the leadership being ensured by general Milea, the minister of National Defense. The situation was extremely confusing, the connections between commanders were difficult, so that the minister of National Defense came to give orders to captains and lieutenants who were near him. As a result of the extremely violent intervention of the law enforcing forces 50 people were killed, 462 injured and 1,245 arrested and transported to penitentiary Jilava<sup>16</sup>.

Nicolae Ceaușescu and Elena Ceaușescu stayed overnight in the specially prepared bedroom in the RCP Central Committee building to be speedily informed on the development of events and to offer injunctions regarding the way to handle them. At about 1:00 a.m. Vasile Milea and Iulian Vlad informed Nicolae Ceaușescu that the central zone of the city was free of demonstrators<sup>17</sup>. The two generals were deeply affected by the tragedy they experienced. General Vlad thought that, in order to solve this dramatic situation was to eliminate Ceaușescu.

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He was going to tell the Senate Commission in October 1993 that general Milea was deeply affected by the situation he had been caught in. "We went out on the corridor, we sat in the armchairs and [Milea] started to cry and said his health did not allow him anymore, that I should tell his wife and girls what had happened, that he was not prepared for what happened. Then I told him that we could not leave things like this, that power was in our hands, his and mine. I controlled things in the CC building, he controlled things outside, but he was very affected." When a senator asked: "What did you propose him to do?" Vlad answered: "That we had to arrest Ceaușescu!". But Milea replied: "My dear, I can't, I can't do it."<sup>18</sup>

This clearly shows the state of mind at the highest level of the army and the Securitate. On the night of December 21/22 there was the possibility of Nicolae Ceaușescu being arrested or declared unavailable as a leader - and general Iulian Vlad - to announce that a new leadership was chosen. But nobody took such responsibility. The reasons were numerous: fear, opportunism, lack of historical vision, etc. Irrespective of the reasons that could be mentioned, the reality is that Romania could not provide "a reserve team" to replace Ceaușescu and the consequences were dramatic for the citizens of this country.

On the dawn of Friday, December 22, the streets in the centre of Bucharest were cleaned, and the blood washed away with the firefighters' water jets. Armoured vehicles and military in fighting uniforms were massed at the corners leading to Piața Palatului (Palace Square). In the Central Committee building 1,000 military were brought from the Ministry of National Defense and the Department V Securitate with the mission to defend the regime citadel<sup>19</sup>.

The news of the repressions on the night of December 21/22 spread like wildfire in the city and amplified the revolt. On the basis of top injunctions, after the meeting had been "broken", the party officials, as well as the enterprises and institutions managers did not leave the premises, they remained in the middle "of the working people". At that moment, almost everywhere people felt the need to be united. The revolt generated the desire to get organized and act for the overthrow of the dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu. By phone and by going from one factory to another, several party officials informed one another about the events in the centre of Bucharest; the conclusion was that they should go out into the streets from the very early hours of the morning.

The fact that the workers went out in the streets was the triggering factor of the day of December 22 when Ceaușescu was overthrown. From the early

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hours of the morning, at about 5:30 the workers of the big industrial areas – Pipera, Republica, “23 August”, IMGB ( Heavy Machinery Bucharest) a.s.o – headed towards the centre of the city. It was, of course, a spontaneous reaction to the killings that had taken place, but with a certain organization. The demonstrators marched in order, carrying placards with the following slogans: “Jos călăul!” (Down with the assassin), “Jos Ceaușescu!” (Down with Ceaușescu), “Vom muri și vom fi liberi!” (We will die and we will be free), “Noi suntem poporul/Jos cu dictatorul!” (We are the people/ down with the dictator), “Libertate! Libertate!”. Among the rioters there was 12-13-year –olds who scanned “Vom muri și vom fi liberi” (we will die and we will be free).

At about 8:00 Ilie Ceaușescu had a discussion with his brother, in the Central Committee building and told him: “The situation is extremely critical. You have to dismiss the government”. He did not receive any answer. Then Ilie Ceaușescu went to the headquarters of the Ministry of National Defense where he made up a list with the members of the new government and then asked vice-admiral Dinu to summon the military attaches of the Soviet Union and China<sup>20</sup>.

At about 8:30 a.m. the central area of Bucharest was occupied by demonstrators. At 9: 10 a.m. the minister of National Defense, the general Vasile Milea sent (with the indicative Rondo) the following order: “Do not fire at people. The military should withdraw from the fighting equipment, they should not provoke or answer back any provocation”<sup>21</sup>. The order enforcing forces did not intervene anymore. The APCs were left there in the crowd, the military discussing with the demonstrators, assuring them they would not use force or violence<sup>22</sup>.

Not even at the eleventh hour did Ceaușescu accept to give in. He accused general Milea of not being able to restore order. The minister of national defense, full of remorse for his involvement in the repressions the night before and refusing to link his name to other human victims decided to put an end to his life. At about 9:30 a.m. he killed himself in the Central Committee building. Vasile Milea’s action marked “by his self sacrifice, the gap created between the army and its <supreme commander><sup>23</sup>. The news of Milea’s suicide bothered Ceaușescu. Being in the Central Committee building, Ilie Verde – who knew about the situation in Bucharest – went to Ceaușescu whom he found “in a deplorable state, as he was on his very difficult moments when he lost his balance”Verdet asked him not to fire at the people and Ceaușescu answered: “They did not fire at people and they will not”. While he was saying that “he started to temble and said: < yes, we have the treason. He betrayed the country and the people – general Milea>”<sup>24</sup>

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At 9:45 a.m. the last meeting of the CPEX started<sup>25</sup>; Nicolae Ceaușescu asked Radu Ion: “What have you done, Radu?” and the latter answered: “I was there as you ordered. It was impossible to get into discussions. We couldn’t get into the factory. They were leaving ICEM and Turbomecanica in Militari. They even left “23 August”. Comrade Avram could not keep them. Work at the furnaces stopped Nicolae Ceaușescu: “Now it is clear that the action was organized to the last detail. A little while ago general Milea killed himself”. He mentioned: “General Milea left me and two minutes later I was informed he had shot himself. Taking into consideration his behavior during this period it is cleared that he sabotaged the measures to be taken and he closely worked with the foreigners. This is clear.

A very serious situation was created.” Then he asked the CPEX members:” who is determined to fight and who is not?” and he addressed Paul Niculescu-Mizil directly and the latter answered with a question: “If I fight or not? “ In a way or another, everybody stated they would “fight”. Ceaușescu went on: “Let us declare state of emergency in the whole country. This is according to the Constitution and it is the president’s right. We don’t need to summon the State Council” All those present agreed. Silviu Curticeanu stated that, if the demonstrators fire at the military, “we will also fire”. Gheorghe Rădulescu appreciated that “any bloodshed should be avoided”; Dăscălescu said that “we should ponder if to fire at the honest workers” but Tudor Postelnicu replied “not honest workers are the ones who are going to start the fire but the scum and the hooligans”. Nicolae Ceaușescu wanted to mention: “Of course we cannot fire at the workers. We are the representatives of the workers and we cannot fire at them but there are scums among them.” He concluded:” Milea the traitor is to blame and there are probably others as well”. Nicolae Ceaușescu said he had called the first deputy of the minister general Victor Atanasie Stănculescu who “is already at my disposal”. The meeting finished in a state of confusion:

“Nicolae Ceaușescu: What are doing now?”

Vlad Iulian: We do as you said.

Tudor Postelnicu: That’s what we do.”

It is not clear what the general secretary “said”. The words closing the CPEX last meeting clearly show that Ceaușescu was no longer in control of the situation.

The intransigence of the previous day had disappeared after the news that the workers had come out in the streets. The working class did not support the

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regime anymore, they had risen against it. In any resigned to the situation, Ceaușescu had to declare “we cannot fire at the workers”. Without giving order to the army to withdraw to the barracks, Ceaușescu had practically abandoned the idea of using force against the demonstrators. Not even then, when people had been killed, a member of this body had the courage to separate from the general secretary and his politics, including the repressions of the previous night.

After the meeting, Nicolae Ceaușescu required the drawing up of a presidential decree regarding the introduction of state of emergency in the whole country. The decree, read on the radio at 10:11 and on the television channel at 10:50 mentioned: “Taking into consideration the serious breach of public order by terrorist acts, vandalism and destruction of common goods”, according to art.75 in the Constitution we declare the state of emergency in the whole country”. All army units, the units of the ministry of the interior and the patriotic bodies were on alert. During the state of emergency no public reunions were allowed as well as circulation in groups larger than 5 people; circulation at night was banned, starting with 11:00 p.m., with the exception of the people who worked in the nightshift, etc. The decree closed with the following words: “The whole population of the country is obliged to obey the country’s laws, public order, to defend the common goods, to actively take part in the normal development of economic-social activity”. The decree had no practical result: in the streets, there were hundreds of thousand people, maybe millions of Romanians, in the whole country who scanned against Ceaușescu and his regime.

The decisive psychological moment was at 10:59 when the on the radio they announced that the minister of National Defense “had acted as a traitor, against the independence and sovereignty of Romania and realizing he had been discovered he killed himself”. The feeling was that General Vasile Milea had been shot at the request of Nicolae Ceaușescu, as the minister had refused to execute the order of covering the people’s riot in blood. Without its commander, the army fraternized with the demonstrators who thus had the way free to attach the Central Committee building.

General Stănculescu had arrived from Timișoara during the night and in order to avoid being involved in the repression of the demonstrators in Bucharest he went to the Military Hospital where he had his leg cast in plaster and then he went home. He complied to the order received from Nicolae Ceaușescu to come immediately to the Central Committee building on the morning of December 22.

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The moment he arrived, at about 10:00, Ceaușescu required him to take over the command of the army, as Minister Vasile Milea had committed suicide. So, General Stănculescu became the minister of National Defense through a verbal order as it was impossible, under the respective conditions, to issue a presidential decree which had to be signed by Ceaușescu and published in “the Official Gazette.”

Informed that two regiments were heading towards the Central Committee building, one of tanks and the other one mechanized, Stănculescu ordered captain Marius Tufan from the transmissions operational group of the army which was located in the Central Committee building to communicate “my order immediately to go back to the barracks”. The general appreciated correctly the situation, as it was practically impossible for the army to win in the confrontation with the tens of thousands of demonstrators who had occupied the centre of Bucharest. After this order, Stănculescu came to Nicolae Ceaușescu and reported to him “that the units are on their way and will arrive, I hope, in time, but the pressure in the square has increased and we must think of a solution, my opinion is < we had better leave the building>”<sup>26</sup>. In his turn, General Iulian Vlad ordered the Securitate troops who covered the Piața Palatului (Palace Square) and the RCP Central Committee building not to fire at the crowds who were coming towards that location<sup>27</sup>. A similar order was transmitted, from the order of general Vlad and general Romeo Câmpeanu to the deputy of the Militia general inspectorate<sup>28</sup>.

Practically, starting with 10:15 a.m. Nicolae Ceaușescu has been abandoned by all law enforcement authorities: army, securitate, and militia. The Political Executive Committee could no longer take any decision and its members had no courage to propose to Ceaușescu to resign. Nicolae Ceaușescu, suffering from diabetes, troubled by the evolution of the events was incapable to act. The workers’ going out in the streets, after the repression of the previous night, General Milea’s treason was facts that Ceaușescu could not understand and could not accept. His will was paralyzed and he had nobody to talk to. Elena Ceaușescu was at his side, they went out on the corridors from time to time, where there were soldiers and armament cases but they did not know what to tell them, so they went back to the general secretary’s office. The CPEx members who were present in the building were also disappointed; they had no reaction, kept looking at one another then closed themselves in their offices.

The decree regarding the declaration of the state of emergency was broadcast several times on radio and television. The TV program closed at

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11:46<sup>29</sup>. At that moment, an epoch in the history of the Romanian television – as a propaganda instrument in the service of totalitarian socialism - came to an end. According to the printed schedule, the program had to resume at 7:00 p.m. with the evening news, followed by the documentary “The complete economic and political independence of the country – historic achievement of the Nicolae Ceaușescu era” made by Vartan Arachelian, then another documentary: Romania in the world (editor Paul Soloc) etc. until 10:00 p.m. when the program ended. On the radio the program went on with the broadcast of patriotic songs.

The repression on the night of December 21/22 was brought to the knowledge of the world public opinion from the early hours of December 22. Many foreign cameramen filmed scenes of terror from the windows of Intercontinental Hotel which they sent to their television stations.

The Soviet leadership kept a reserved position, but wanted to know the viewpoints of Romania’s neighboring countries which were well informed about the events in Bucharest. The deputy of the Soviet foreign affairs minister Aboimov received Jozef Birnbauer counselor at the Hungarian Embassy to Moscow on the morning of December 22 to whom he communicated Ceaușescu’s attitude to Shevardnadze’s statement in Brussels in connection to the victims in Romania; he also told him that the Soviet party strongly rejected such accusations. Jozef Birnbauer stated that he had no further information, but he knew that “in Budapest there was an atmosphere of mourning and concern”, that the rumor had spread that Tokes had been killed. The diplomat was convinced that “the events of the last hours will dramatically change this state of mind”<sup>30</sup>.

Aboimov had a discussion with the Yugoslav ambassador on the same morning, at the latter’s request: he wanted to communicate to the Soviet party the information he had, mainly from the general consul of Yugoslavia to Timișoara and from numerous Yugoslav citizens who had come back from Romania. He described the events in Timișoara after December 16: “Yugoslav sources say that there are several hundreds of dead people as a result of the confrontations, unverified estimates say that the number of the victims is over 2,000[...]. The workers occupied the factories and threaten to blow them up, if the authorities do not meet the people’s requirements”. The officials in the Yugoslav consulate found out that “some soldiers and militia officers express their understanding towards the demonstrators. There were heard such slogans: <Armata nu va împușca studenți și copii de școală> (the army won’t fire at students and school children)<sup>31</sup>.

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In Bucharest, the events started happening at an amazing speed. At 11:00 a.m. at the US Embassy there came the ambassadors of Belgium, France, Spain, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands who withdrew in the “ embassy’s sound-proof room, a glass dome” where they discussed “what was to be done”<sup>32</sup>. They had been involved in supporting dissidents, paying visits to their residence, receiving letters from them to be sent to Radio Free Europe, had sent to their governments’ documents and materials regarding the situation in Romania which they used to condemn the Ceaușescu regime.

They did not manage to agree on what they had to do next, as Nicolae Ceaușescu was living his last days as a general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and of president of the Socialist Republic of Romania. The crowds in the Piața Universității - (University Square) - Hotel Intercontinental and in Piața Romană (The Roman Square) started to move towards the Central Committee building without encountering any opposition from the order enforcing forces; in a few minutes they occupied the Piața Palatului (Palace Square) getting ready to attack the Central Committee building.

Nicolae Ceaușescu went out on the balcony at about 11:30 a.m. with a loudspeaker in his hands trying to calm down the crowds. He could not speak because he was booed and jeered and many threw different objects at him. Disoriented and incapable to face the situation, he had to withdraw.

At the Ministry of National Defense, at about 12:00 p.m. Ceaușescu received the representative of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet military attaché whom he informed that during the day the constitution of the new government will be announced and he asked the Soviet Union to restrain itself, as the imperialist circles organized an international plot with the purpose of destroying socialism and of taking Romania out of the socialist system and from the Warsaw Pact. Ilie Ceaușescu was convinced that the Romanian people were capable to solve its own issues alone<sup>33</sup>.

Eventually, after one week of avoiding to publicly expressing their position towards the situation in Romania, on the morning of December 22, the Congress of the USSR People’s Deputies was informed by Gorbachev that he got news from the Soviet embassy to Bucharest about the events of the previous night, thus proposing the issuing of a political statement. The statement, adopted with an overwhelming majority (1,809 votes in favor, 32 against and 65 abstain) had the following content: “The Congress of the USSR People’s deputies expresses its concern in connection with the news referring to the dramatic events in Romania

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which led to victims. This fact makes us feel a profound regret. We express the hope that, in the shortest of times, Romania will find possibilities to peacefully solve the matters, in the spirit of patience, humanism and the observance of human rights<sup>34</sup>. While Moldova adopted the same document, in Bucharest the revolutionaries broke into the Central Committee building and the military that were inside, although they were equipped with armament and ammunition did not resist. Many revolutionaries got arms, being ready to fight back if attacked.

Colonel Neagoe, the head of the Department V in the Ministry of the Interior had the initiative to call for some helicopters to evacuate Nicolae Ceaușescu and the other leaders. General Stănculescu spoke to general Iosif Rus, the aviation commander to send the helicopters; one of them landed on the roof of the Central Committee building. When the first revolutionaries reached the platform, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Elena Ceaușescu as well as Emil Bobu and Manea Manescu were already in the helicopter. A military major David Aurel asked them to stop: "Please, stop! Don't get near!" The helicopter went up towards Bulevardul Magheru (Magheru Avenue) not to flyover the square full of people.

At 12:06, when Nicolae Ceaușescu left the Central Committee building, which symbolised the vital centre of political power in Romania, the socialist totalitarian regime had fallen down. Tens of thousands of people in the Piata Palatului (Palace Square) watched the helicopter take off and fly away with the feeling they got rid of the cruelest dictator in Romania's history. From another helicopter flyers were thrown which read: "Dușmanii v-au ademenit să faceți rău țării. Aceștia doresc haosul și dezordinea, ca pe acest fond să cucerească Transilvania, România întreagă. Opriti acțiunile nechibzuite până nu este prea târziu" (enemies deceived you into harming your country. They want chaos and disorder so that they could conquer Transylvania, the whole Romania. Stop the unreasonable actions before it is not too late)<sup>35</sup>.

In order to avoid a state of confusion among the soldiers, at 1:00 p.m. general Stănculescu signed a phone note through which he ordered that the army obeys the ministry of national defense only<sup>36</sup>.

Some minutes before Ceaușescu's fall (at 2:00 Moscow time – 1:00 p.m. Romania time) the Romanian ambassador Ion Bucur was summoned at the Ministry of foreign affairs where I. P. Aboimov expressed the Soviet leadership viewpoint in connection to the Romanian leader's statement of December 20: "In the spirit of honesty, characteristic for the relations between us, we would like to express our surprise at the tone and statement regarding USSR's role and position

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in connection to the events in Timișoara. We strongly reject the statements regarding the anti-Romanian campaign which would take place in the USSR, without mentioning the accusation according to which the actions against Romania would be planned within the Warsaw Pact. Such statements are unfounded and absolutely unacceptable. Similarly absurd are the statements of some Romanian officials about USSR's intentions to intervene in Romania". The deputy of the foreign affairs minister reiterated the fact that his country observes the principle of sovereignty, independence, equality in rights, non-interference in interior matters, but as there were victims in Romania, the Soviet citizens expressed their "serious concern and profound regrets". Aboimov wanted to remind the fact that Soviet Union pronounced against the summoning of the Security Council in connection to the events in Romania, considering that this would mean interference in the interior matters of a sovereign state on the part of an international body. The Soviet diplomat concluded his statement by saying that the Soviet Union wanted the further development of relations between the two countries "in the interest of our peoples, of the cause of peace and socialism"<sup>37</sup>.

#### THE NEW POWER

On the day of December 22 1989 a part of the revolutionaries were left in the Central Committee building and in the Piața Palatului (Palace Square) and others went to the national radio station and some others to the television station. The first to arrive at the TV building and to discuss with the general manager Petre Constantin the resumption of the broadcast were Cazimir Ionescu, Mihai Voicu, Bebe Ivanovici. The news that Nicolae Ceaușescu had fled away was announced by the Romanian television at about 1:00 p.m., through the interventions of the actor Ion Caramitru and the poet Mircea Dinescu. On the national radio station the news was announced by Alexandru Mironov. In his turn, Emanuel Valeriu sent, by phone, from Bucharest the first report received by "Radio Free Europe" which was broadcast immediately<sup>38</sup>.

The media played an exceptional role at the end of December 1989. The news about Ceaușescu's escape generated enormous enthusiasm all over the country. The word "freedom" was on everybody's lips, the people hugged one another, cars with lights on honked announcing the victory: "Ole, ole, Ceaușescu nu mai e!" (Hurray, hurray, Ceaușescu has gone).

As enthusiastic as the rest of the people were the representatives of the western states accredited to Bucharest as they considered Ceaușescu's downfall

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was also due to them. The Dutch ambassador Coen Stork, who was in the US Embassy, was going to say: "I did not know what was going to happen to Ceaușescu, but this had to be the end. We stood up, the 5-6 ambassadors who were there, we hugged, it was an extremely moving atmosphere"<sup>39</sup>.

To express their opinions, some revolutionaries went to the television building and others to the radio station. This was starting point for the live broadcast of the revolution<sup>40</sup>. Most of the revolutionaries stayed in the Piața Palatului (Palace Square) to listen to the speeches delivered from the balcony of the Central Committee building. There was a mass of people willing to express their joy for the dictatorship overthrow, to thank the young, especially the students for their sacrifice, to proclaim freedom, democracy, happiness, trust in God. The most active were some actors, directors and writers, but there were also those who had opposed the Ceaușescu regime. Even some of the old party officials, including members of the Executive Political Committee (Dumitru Popescu, Gheorghe Rădulescu, Janos Fazekas) came to the television station to condemn the "horrible dictator".

However, nobody assumed the responsibility to take over power in those moments and to announce the program that had to be put into practice after the overthrow of the Ceaușescu regime. At 1:30 p.m. general Stănculescu signed a phone note where he mentioned: Military units on the whole territory of the country withdraw in the barracks, calmly without allowing to be provoked, disarmed or dispersed. Military units which are located in front of county party headquarters will calm down the spirits, without firing, then withdraw to the barracks. Defense of the barracks and all military units should be organized."<sup>41</sup> In another phone note, sent at the same time, general Stănculescu said: "Only orders coming from the minister of National Defense are to be executed"<sup>42</sup>.

Taking into consideration the order, military commanders had to ensure the defense of the civil location of extreme importance with armed units which should not fire unless under attack by armed groups. In order to prioritize necessities, military commanders should consult the representatives of local bodies. The military ensuring defense of these locations should wear a tri-coloured armband on the left arm"<sup>43</sup>. On the basis of these phone notes, some historians and laymen came to consider that Stănculescu led a coup d'état and relying on the army support he took over political power in Romania.

An analysis of the situation, even a very superficial one, of that day of December 22 1989 leads to the conclusion that the phone notes mentioned before

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were the result of a situation which had not been created by general Stanculescu but by the masses which had gained power in the streets. In this context, the army could not confront hundreds of thousands of people: they did not do it on the morning of December 22, when Ceausescu was still in power so they could not do it now, when the feeling of victory gave the Romanians even more courage<sup>44</sup>.

At 1:30 p.m. Nicolae Ceausescu had abandoned power and had no longer the position of Supreme Commander of the army that of general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party nor that of president of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

A coup d'état means the deposition de facto of the leader in power, but at that moment Romania had no leader. As a consequence, general Stanculescu had nobody to have a coup against, as such an action – even if that was his intention – was useless. At 1:30, the one whom Ceaușescu had verbally nominated as minister of the National Defense issued an order to the army, which corresponded to the logics of the moment.

What is significant is that general Stanculescu left the Central Committee building after making sure that the helicopter having Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu on board had left: as he confessed, he made his way in the crowds and walked to the former headquarters of the ministry of national defense<sup>45</sup> on Valter Maracineanu Street (near the Cismigiu Park) to get a car and get to the minister of national defense. It would be a unique case in history for the author of a coup d'état to mingle with the crowds as nobody although he was “the master” the leader who with a blow had thrown over a whole political regime. After “the author” of the coup d'état managed to get a car, he went to the ministry of national defense in Drumul Taberei neighborhood where he got rid of the plaster. From now on, he performed his function as a minister under the conditions where the designated minister General Vasile Milea was dead and General Stefan Gusa – the chief of General Staff – had not arrived from Timisoara yet.

General Stanculescu used the fact that he was first deputy of the minister and that he had been nominated by Nicolae Ceausescu. His order referred to the army action which had to guard civil locations of special importance and not to fire when attacked. The author of the “coup d'état” did not take any office nor did he appoint anyone to lead the government or other political-administrative structures. On the contrary, he required the military commanders to consult with the representatives of the local bodies on whom – the author of the “coup d'état” – he had no influence.

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From the moment Nicolae Ceausescu left the Central Committee building – the symbol and the true vital centre of power – he could no longer perform any of his constitutional prerogatives. Ceausescu was not only the supreme commander of the army and the chairman of the Defense Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania but the president of the Republic and of the State Council, he named and fired ministers, members of the Supreme Tribunal, he established diplomatic ranks<sup>46</sup>, etc. As general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, Ceausescu watched over all party bodies and organizations, including the first county secretaries who were at the same time the chairmen of the county counsels. To reduce the Ceausescu's positions and power at a military dimension, in order to justify "the coup d'etat" is very simplistic. Ceausescu could not exercise his power not because Stanculescu sent an order to the army but because due to the huge popular pressure, he had to leave the help of the country.

It is a well-known fact in history that a person who organizes a coup d'etat addresses the citizens immediately, announcing them that he took over power under those exceptional circumstances; after throwing the whole blame on the overthrown one, he launches a document or at least some slogans as to the way of his future actions; the population is required to calm down by being assured that everything will be alright and there is a new era starting in the country's history. In reality, on December 22 1989, general Stanculescu did not go to the radio station or to the television station to make such announcements but he stayed in his office in the ministry of national defense to ensure the operational leadership of the army and, firstly, to avoid confrontation between military and demonstrators. In fact, general Stanculescu did not show any propensity for becoming a political leader, he did not address the civil state structures but he waited for the development of events in order to be at the disposal of the new leadership of the country by ensuring the army's support. At 1:30 p.m. there was no leadership to whom he could speak; in fact there was a void of power and the situation in the country could not be kept under control. The state of elation was induced from Bucharest through the radio and television where several citizens – of different professions and levels of intellectual achievement – who, all of them, expressed their joy that Romania had become a free country and there was an era of prosperity and happiness starting for the people. In all counties there were such demonstrations but the population watched the capital to see what was going to happen.

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The officials at the leadership of the country, counties and communes elected or named during Ceausescu's time could no longer exercise their duties being annihilated through the people's actions that had broken into the party committees' headquarters and the people's councils buildings. Each town had its own "balcony" where people delivered speeches, the revolutionaries announcing the victory against dictatorship, the beginning of a new era in the history of Romania, based on democracy and freedom.

Taking into consideration this reality, the statement according to which general Stanculescu became the leader, by means of "a coup d'etat" is really fantastic. At that time, Romania had no state authority left. The headquarters of leading bodies were occupied by demonstrators who destroyed Nicolae Ceausescu's portraits, pulled down slogans and threw the former dictator's books out in the streets. Even if he had the intention to take the state power, general Stanculescu had nobody he could address to execute his orders.

General Stanculescu's merit is that, during those moments when the army was left without a minister, as his nomination by Nicolae Ceausescu had not been made public, assumed the responsibility to take command and he ordered the withdrawal of the military to the barracks. Such slogans "armata e cu noi!" (the army is on our side) could be heard but nobody could exclude possible provocation leading to incidents and even to violent confrontations between civilians and military with disastrous consequences for the country.

Military discipline requires a commander who gives orders come which are to be executed by everybody in lower ranks.

Under the conditions where General Stefan Gusa – the chief of the General Staff and the rightful deputy of the minister of national defense – had not arrived from Timisoara, the military body had to have a leader and general Stanculescu assumed this responsibility.

However, the situation was not very clear. General Stanculescu had been named minister of national defense through a verbal order given by Nicolae Ceausescu without making this nomination known to the army commanders and other leading factors. Normally, after Milea's death, the position of minister was occupied by the chief of General Staff and many generals knew that Stefan Gușă was the one to give orders. Coming back from Timișoara, Gușă installed himself in the Central Committee headquarters and not in the ministry of national defense and his effort to communicate with the commanders was useless<sup>47</sup>. The television channel announced that the minister of national defense was general Militaru and

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many generals and officers considered themselves commanders giving orders to different units, when to go to barracks and when to move through Bucharest to defend the Revolution. This explains the confusion and the contradictory orders which puzzled the ones who had to obey them. After ordering the withdrawal to the barracks, another order asked the army to come back in the streets to defend important locations in the cities.

Many of those who had spoken from the balcony on the Central Committee building, on the radio and on television announced the setting up of a new government and the drawing up of a revolutionary program. Among these, the former Prime Minister Constantin Dăscălescu who was jeered by the demonstrators and made to resign, Ilie Verdeț – a former prime minister as well – but the people did not allow him to speak. At the certain moment, somebody shouted “Let’s Corneliu Mănescu come and make the government”; he had been a foreign affairs minister and had signed “The letter of the six” in March 1989, as a result being “kept” on the outskirts of Bucharest.

Several attempts to create a government could be seen on the corridors of the Central Committee building, the television station and even in the streets; they did not last more than a few minutes. In his first televised intervention Mircea Dinescu announced: In ten minutes we are going to broadcast an appeal to the population!” But that appeal which should have been a program was not made anymore.

At 2:00 p.m., captain of I rank Constantin Cico Dumitrescu spoke from Studio 4 of the Television station: “I ask comrade Ion Iliescu, one of my colleagues\* to come to the television! We must, comrades, organize ourselves!”<sup>48</sup> Writing about those events, Ion Iliescu said: “The moment I decided to go to the television building, my choice was simple: I wanted to be present at the scene of events I had expected and I considered decisive for the destiny of the country. [ ...] Seeing this enormous release of energy I said to myself that the most urgent thing to do was to give coherence to the spontaneous movement of the masses, to avoid chaos and anarchy, to create a nucleus around which to regroup all the forces capable to orient the wishes of the crowds and to organize their actions in a political program with unitary direction.”<sup>49</sup> Ion Iliescu’s apparition at the television station, a few hours after Nicolae Ceaușescu’s escape, was welcomed with enthusiasm by Teodor Brates who had taken over the leadership of the programs in studio 4. Along the years, Ion Iliescu had made friends from among those he had worked with in the Students’ Association Union, the Propaganda

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section of the Central Committee of RCP, the party committees in Timis and Iasi, the National Council for Waters, the Tehnica publishing house; a music and theatre lover, he had acquaintances in the world of artists and many intellectuals. There is no wonder that, among those who were present at the television station on the afternoon of December 22 1989 Ion Iliescu was the best-known and most appreciated political figure.

Endowed with a real political touch, he understood that he had to get involved in the organization of the new power structure in order to avoid the extension of chaos in the country. He spoke at 2:35 p.m. and after hailing the overthrow of Ceaușescu the dictator he said: “Our people must prove maturity in these moments, so that we can reorganize ourselves on a democratic basis. We will set up a committee of national salvation to bring order.”<sup>50</sup>

He summoned all “those responsible who can contribute to this constructive work” come to the Central Committee at 5:00 p.m.” We need to organize ourselves, in a National Salvation Committee. We need to draw up an action plan”. So, from his first public apparition, Ion Iliescu behaved as a political leader, determined to assume responsibility for the organization of Romania on a democratic basis.

From the television building, Iliescu went to the ministry of national defense where he discussed with general Stănculescu. Later on, Iliescu said: “He offered us shelter and the first items of information. I realized that the only institution we could rely on, under those conditions was the Army. There was the special phone network which covered the whole of Romania.”<sup>51</sup>

General Victor Stănculescu was to relate this moment as follows: “I told Sergiu Nicolaescu I would send an APC to the television station to take them from there as I could offer them protection at the ministry of national defense. And then they came to the ministry Iliescu and Nicolaescu with Voican and another one who kept holding his shotgun on the chest, Montanu and the adjutant told them: <don’t go in there with arms, the armament stays here>. Then Iliescu asked me: <what is the situation?> and I answered: <I can ensure your security and peace and I offer you the Military Council hall>. “General Stănculescu said that “Iliescu did not know what to ask, and I told him that the situation at that hour was the following – the army was back in the barracks - I repeat – I can assure your safety and we will not take the army out of the barracks again”.

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When asked by Dinu Săraru: “How did you treat him? As a possible leader of the Revolution”, Stănculescu answered: “I considered that he could be the leader. [...]. I trusted him, this was the truth, I did not tell him: <take the command and get to work> but I let him do it his own way, so it was not <I nominate you and pay attention to what you are going to do from now on...I don't know what>”. The general explained: “all the time I assured them food and in the Council hall they had mattresses, beds and I asked them all to sleep in the ministry that night”<sup>52</sup>.

General Stănculescu's story, related in 2004, contains two incorrect elements: those mentioned did not come to the Ministry of National Defense brought in an APC but they traveled in normal cars; they stayed for the night of December 22/23 at the television station and did not sleep in the ministry. But as a whole the statement is correct: namely, in the position of minister of national defense, the general offered Ion Iliescu and his<sup>53</sup> followers' personal protection, the hall where they could have their discussions, food and shelter. In spite of all this, the idea was that on that first meeting “the army gave the power to Ion Iliescu.”

In order to hand over the power, the army should have had that power, control the situation in the country, the state body should be functional and comply with the orders given by general Stănculescu. It is certain that on the afternoon of December 22, the old state mechanism did not work anymore, and the new power was still inexistent.

In that atmosphere of general confusion, Victor Stănculescu took an important decision: he offered the new power that was consolidating, under the leadership of Ion Iliescu the army support, the only national institution which kept its organizational structure and which acted in compliance with the orders of the minister of national defense. Moreover, he offered the necessary logistics from phone network to beds to sleep in.

By his decision to take over the command of the Romanian army in a decisive moment, general Victor Stănculescu linked his name to the victory of the revolution of December 1989. There is no need to invent data and historical realities to attribute him actions he did not do and acts he did not commit. General Stănculescu placed himself at the disposal of the new power which was constituted on the evening of December 22 and executed its decisions.

Coming back to the development of the events, we should mention the fact that, in the atmosphere of elation and dissolution of state authority in many places,

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different individuals started to break in shops (especially the food ones) and steal products. Even in the building of the Central Committee filing cabinets were broken, lamps and telephones were stolen, and carpets were taken away by “the revolutionaries”. The soldiers who were inside the building had left their positions and left behind armament and ammunition. Taking this chance, many revolutionaries took the arms to defend themselves in the event of an attack from the Securitate.

Very soon, rumors started to spread, which could still be believed as nobody expected Nicolae Ceaușescu to have abandoned power for good. The one who was the first to launch the idea that the revolution was in danger was general Nicolae Militaru: he came at the Television station at about 2:00 p.m. and addressed an appeal to “comrades generals who had positions of responsibility in the Romanian army – naming general Gușă, Eftimescu, Topliceanu, a.s.o – asking them:” Stop the massacre! Give orders to stop the bloodshed!”<sup>54</sup>. The appeal was surprising, as everywhere there was an atmosphere of elation and no armed incident took place. General Ștefan Gușă, the chief of General Staff was to say that Nicolae Militaru “had a previously well-designed plan” with a view to destabilizing the army and “taking some heads down.”<sup>55</sup>

Dressed in a general’s uniform, giving orders to the army although he had no right, Nicolae Militaru’s statements could seem credible.\* In the following hours such appeals intensified; Teodor Brates, Victor Ionescu, Petru Popescu, Cornelius Roșianu, George Marinescu and other anchors but different revolutionaries from studio 4 asked the population to come to defend the television building. The same state of mind was induced at the radio station. Mircea Munteanu, Viorel Popescu and other employees of this institution, as well as revolutionaries who were allowed to use the microphone launched appeals to the population to be vigilant. At about 3:00 p.m. Viorel Popescu addressed the following appeal: Citizens of Bucharest, we are informed that the Radio broadcasting studios are in danger. We urge you to come in the streets, to defend the Radio building in Nuferilor Street. We need to keep the victory we have obtained with our sacrifice, dear citizens of Romania! Don’t let the victory slip away! Now or never, liberty must be installed in Romania![...] Romanian officers and soldiers, order enforcing people, citizens of Bucharest, defend these strategic locations which are the radio and the Romanian television ! Build a living wall around these important means of communication among all of us, Romanian brothers! We must defend the people’s victory!”<sup>56</sup> At 5:00 p.m. the same anchor

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announced that in the Piața Palatului (Palace Square) “terrible fights”<sup>57</sup> took place and he appealed to truck drivers to come and surround the radio building so that terrorists could not get close.

The population was impelled to defend the revolution and to fight against terrorists who could have hidden in blocks of flats, in basements and were ready to blow the buildings up. In that atmosphere, many citizens went to the enterprises and institutions where they worked, took the arms of the patriotic guards (constituted in August 1968) and went out in the streets; some got arms from the military themselves. At crossroads and around the main buildings – first the radio building and the television building – teams of revolutionaries were set up with a tri-colored armband on the arm who started to check the population for guns and grenades or other arms dangerous for the revolution. The whole country seemed to sink into chaos. Everything that meant authority, order, and discipline was expressions used by the dictatorship, state property was Ceaușescu’s and was worth destroying. In many localities the shop windows were broken to pieces and everything that could be held in the arms from cans to fur coats was stolen; not few workers took goods belonging to the enterprises where they worked; the peasants started to ransack the Agricultural production cooperatives taking cattle, horses, sheep, cars, etc.

After a short stop in Snagov, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu headed to Târgoviște. At a certain moment, the pilot Vasile Malutan announced that the helicopter had been discovered. They did not have a precise destination and the statements according to which there was a “ZZ plan” regarding the head of state evacuation to a certain locality with all the necessary equipment to lead the resistance fight in order to come back to power seemed to be a phantasy.\*. Such a plan was under discussion in 1968 after Czechoslovakia’s invasion, but it never became a reality. In fact Ceaușescu was abandoned by all his collaborators, including the pilot Vasile Măluță who announced that the helicopter had been discovered and there was the danger to be shot down. Nicolae Ceaușescu accepted to land on the București-Titu highway where he got off with his wife. Immediately, the helicopter took off, the two remaining to “hitch-hike”. They went in a doctor’s car to the Văcărești commune, then in another car which took them to the Centre for Plants Protection near Târgoviște. From there they were taken by two militia officers who transported them to the Ratoaia forest next to Bocșani commune where they got off at about 2:30 p.m.

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During all this time, the radio and television broadcast the most unbelievable rumors about Ceaușescu: they ran to Iran or North Korea, they took refuge in the mountains and they intended to come back to Bucharest accompanied by many Securitate officers and terrorists to smother the revolution; he would be helped by foreign armies; helicopters coming from the Black Sea were identified; Romania was on the verge of foreign aggression.

The Văcărești local government, finding out about whom that respective doctor had transported, phoned the television announcing that the Ceaușescus headed towards Targoviste. From that moment on, speculations started as to the place where Ceaușescu established himself in order to lead the revolution repression action. In reality, the two were left in Ratoaia forest until 5:30 p.m. when they were transported to the Militia county inspectorate; they arrived to the Inspectorate at about 6:00 p.m.

After a short while, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu were taken by two army officers and led to the Military unit whose commander was Colonel Andrei Kemenici. They stayed in that unit, under protection, until their execution on December 25.

On the afternoon of December 22, in the whole country there was great enthusiasm that, at last, the Romanians had escaped dictatorship and they were free. The county, town and even commune committees were ransacked, the political leaders were sent away and some of them were even arrested. The revolution had covered, practically the whole of Romania. The Securitate headquarters were in the centre of the revolutionaries' attention but there – according to the order given by general Iulian Vlad – the armament was in the store room, the file cabinets were sealed, nobody reacted to defend Ceaușescu<sup>58</sup>. Obviously, the “whole nation” was concentrated on watching Bucharest where the television and the radio continued to broadcast speeches. Among the speakers on TV there was the patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Teoctist who stated that it was impossible that the church through her leaders should be present in those grandiose moments in the history of the Romanian people; he expressed his adherence to the moment and “ appealed to the hierarchs, priests and believers of the Romanian Orthodox Church to collaborate and follow the instructions of the local committees so that this piece of work be completed so that all the actions be fulfilled, historical acts in the history of our people.”<sup>59</sup>

Getting to the Central Committee after 5:00 p.m. Ion Iliescu addressed the crowds announcing the constitution of “the National Salvation Front council. We

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will draw up organizational measures, provisional for the moment, for the organization, leadership, public administration at central and local level, in all counties [...] Our purpose is to build a new structure of the political power [...]. We will create provisional structures to ensure the functioning of the society, to prepare free elections, to prepare a life where the people are the decision factor, the leading factor of public life.”<sup>60</sup>

From the two interventions on the television and in the Palace Square we can conclude that, on the one hand, Ion Iliescu’s decision to assure the reorganization of the society, on the other hand, that the moment Ceaușescu fell, no necessary documents were prepared and no people were designated to take over the power.

The name of the new organization – the National Salvation Front – suggested the idea of the Romanian people unity against the dictatorship, at the same time being opposed to the single party, who had operated in Romania over the last decades. In other socialist countries (Czechoslovakia, D. R. Germany) they preferred the name of Forum, based on civil society, but in Romania the civil society was inexistent.<sup>61</sup>

The appeal sent by Ion Iliescu through the television was answered by several people. In the Central Committee building together with Ion Iliescu there were Silviu Brucan, Petre Roman, General Nicolae Militaru, General Stefan Gusa, Gelu Voican-Voiculescu, Captain Mihai Lupoi, Colonel Parcalabescu, Dumitru Apostoiu. Gheorghe Apostol – a former party activist – wanted to join the group but he was turned down. It is not clear which the criteria for the selection were. In fact, Gheorghe Apostol had signed “Scrisoarea celor 6” (The Letter of the 6) as well as Brucan who now played the role of revolution’s ideologue. Petre Roman would write: “While we were still in the Central Committee building, they announced that Gheorghe Apostol had arrived. We all refused him [...]. At a certain moment they announced Corneliu Coposu was there. I could say a word. < Let him go away> shouted, almost simultaneously Barladeanu and Iliescu. I kept silent”, his excuse being that he did not know anything Coposu’s past. Later he found out, so in 1994 he could appreciate: “Now I am convinced that, at that very moment, the revolution took a wrong turn.”<sup>62</sup>

On another occasion, Petre Roman would say that the scene took place in the Television building. “I remember that we were at the television headquarters, an imposing man appeared, dressed in a grey overcoat, rather old-fashioned, with a lamb black fur hat, well thrust on his head and when somebody said he was

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Coposu there was a negative reaction. I had no time to budge. < Let him go away > shouted, almost simultaneously Bârlădeanu and Iliescu. I kept silent.”<sup>63</sup> It is worth mentioning that the National Peasants’ Party leader Corneliu Coposu, who repeatedly spoke about his activity on December 22 1989, did ever mention his visit to the Central Committee building or inside the television building. He stated that on that afternoon he went to the television building:” When I got there, although some of our friends were already inside – one of them is the present general secretary of our party [P.N.T.C.D.] \*(Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party) - Iliescu himself allowed him inside – access to Studio 4 was restricted. I sent word through several people I knew, who had entrance permit that I was there and I wanted to get to Iliescu who had already spoken to the people. I could not get inside. I sent a note to Iliescu but he did not answer it. I did not insist anymore.”<sup>64</sup>

So, Coposu could not get into the television building and he could not address the Romanians as the leader of the National Peasants’ Party and Petre Roman’s stories proved to be unreliable.

At the television headquarters, a certain selection of those who were allowed to speak in Studio 4, Teodor Brăteş being the one who approved the person. It is not clear which the criteria for the selection were (among those who got in the building but were not allowed to speak were Alexandru Drăghici, Gheorghe Apostol, Dumitru Popescu and other communist leaders).

In a very uncertain atmosphere – when everybody spoke and did not listen to the others, and the door to the studio was pushed open by people who wanted to take part in that meeting – the founding document of the Romanian Revolution was drawn up<sup>65</sup>. Ion Iliescu proposed the new leading body be called Frontul Salvării Naționale (The National Salvation Front) with a council to ensure the achievement of proposed objectives. General Militaru suggested that the body “be a party and state body”, but Petre Roman replied: “not party and state, in any case. It sounds like hell”. Iliescu said that FSN was “a structure of the new power”. Petre Roman and Nicolae Militaru proposed that the founding document comprises: “The Council of the National Salvation Front, led by Ion Iliescu” but Silviu Brucan replied: “I don’t think it will work with only one person”. Ion Iliescu found out that Dumitru Mazilu had a “text” so he proposed he was brought to that discussion in the Central Committee building.

According to his words, Dumitru Mazilu was arrested on the morning of December 22 and transported, handcuffed and gagged, to Alexandria.<sup>66</sup> After

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finding out about Nicolae Ceaușescu's escape, the Securitate officers released him and brought him back at about 4:30 p.m. When in Bucharest, Dumitru Mazilu went home where his wife had the document the professor had written and the Securitate people could not find. Then, he went to Piața Palatului<sup>67</sup>. He delivered a speech from the balcony of the Central Committee building at about 5:30 p.m. announcing a platform –program to lay the base for the Civic Forum<sup>68</sup>, name inspired by the events that had taken place in Czechoslovakia.

On the afternoon of December 22 the first newspapers dedicated to the revolution could be read: “Libertatea” (the freedom) – the new name of “Informatia Bucurestilor” (Bucharest news) and “Scanteia Poporului” (The people's spark) – “Scanteia” (the Spark) up to that moment where the people's victory against the dictatorship was hailed. In “Scanteia Poporului” was written: “The Revolution has won! Now we need reason, calm, vigilance for the defense of freedom and national values”. It is obvious the idea that the Romanians had made a “revolution” was used even then, immediately after Nicolae Ceaușescu escape.

At sunset, shootings started in the square in front of the Central Committee building. Who was firing, by whose order, what was the purpose of that violence after Ceaușescu's departure it is not clear and it was not clarified. It was thought that they were Securitate officers devoted to Ceaușescu, but further investigation could not confirm the statement. The documents show that general Vlad ordered the Securitate to lay down their arms. It was not possible to demonstrate that the Securitate opened fire against the demonstrators or that they had acted like fanatics for Ceaușescu's defense. It is true that according to collective psychology Ceaușescu kept his power with the help of the Securitate who kept under terror the Romanians and it was impossible that the Securitate would not fight to bring the party general secretary back to power. In fact, this was the very reason for the existence of the Securitate – to defend Ceaușescu and his overthrow meant the Securitate was left without “the object of their work”. That is why Ceaușescu had to be brought back in power and the Securitate remain the main institution of his regime.

After the revolution the idea arose that the terrorists were controlled by the new power led by Ion Iliescu in order to justify the « coup d'etat » and appear as saviors of Romania threatened by a civil war. There were opinions according to which it a scenario was prepared abroad, aiming at Romania's dismemberment.

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Before archive documents in the country and in other European states and the United States get investigated, this matter cannot be clarified.

The propaganda made by Radio Free Europe and other foreign radio stations as well as the way in which political leaders in the West reacted clearly shows that a confrontation between the Securitate and the Army was expected. The radio stations and several political leaders in the West stated that Romania was coping with a fight between Security people, on the one hand, and the military that were supporting the revolutionaries, on the other hand. When the scenario proved to be unreal, those who shot at the citizens were no longer called "securitate" but "terrorists". The latter – the terrorists – were a kind of superhumans, specially trained to smother the revolution and make as many victims as possible. In those heated days the idea arose that the "terrorists" were fanatic Romanians ready to commit abominable crimes, turn everything into bloodshed to get Ceaușescu back in power. It was also stated that these terrorists were Arabs, especially Libyans who had been trained in Romania to become a kind of "killers", associated with mercenaries who were paid huge sums of money to defend Ceaușescu. In order not to lose their privileges they acted like blind robots, killing anybody in the streets being considered Ceaușescu's enemy. "The terrorists" were everywhere: in the building of the Central Committee, of the television, of the radio, on the roofs of residence buildings, under staircases, in basements, as well as in cemeteries, hiding in family vaults or behind crosses to shoot at revolutionaries and citizens in order to create panic and lead to a civil war. An analysis regarding the messages received by the army between December 22–31, 1989 shows that most messages were sent by "unidentified persons" and "anonymous persons" and their contents proved to be false.

The team who assumed the responsibility to take over Romania's leadership went from the Central Committee building to the Ministry of National Defense where there was a communications system allowing connections to the whole national territory; at the same time, the army was an organized structure, which the new power could rely on. General Stănculescu ensured the leadership of the army and the permanent contact with the heads of the Revolution with the help of Mihai Montanu. The Military Command of the Revolution was created on an ad-hoc basis in order to ensure the coordination of activities in the territory.

The activity to formulate the platform-program continued in the television building with Dumitru Mazilu's text as a basis and with several amendments and additions written by Silviu Brucan. At Ion Iliescu's proposal there were

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introduced new chapters as follows: dissolution of all existing power structures; maintained of central and local administration until elections; completion of the Council of the National Salvation Front and the election of local provisional organs. Late at night, at about 11:35 p.m. Ion Iliescu read this document, entitled “Comunicatul catre tara al Consiliului Frontului Salvării Naționale” (communicate to the people by the Council of the National Salvation Front)<sup>69</sup> starting as follows: “Citizens, we are living a historic moment. The Ceaușescu clan who brought the country to disaster was overthrown”; this act meant “a new leaf in the political and economic life of Romania”.

The communicate brought to the knowledge of the public opinion: “at this moment of challenges we have decided to constitute the National Salvation Front which is supported by the Romanian army and which gathers the country’s solid forces, irrespective of nationality, all the groups who courageously rose to the defense of liberty and dignity during the years of totalitarian tyranny.”

The FSN objective was “the installation of democracy, liberty and dignity of the Romanian people”. The dissolution of all power structures was announced; the government was considered dissolved, the State Council and its institutions ceased their activity. “The whole state power is taken over by the Council of the National Salvation Front” which subordinates the Superior Military Council, ministries and central organs, “to ensure the normal development of economic and social life”. In the territory there were going to be created county, municipal, town and communal councils of the National Salvation Front “as organs of the local power”. The militia was called to “enforce the public order together with the citizens’ committees”. These bodies had to take all necessary measures “to ensure the supply of the population with food, electricity, heating and water, to ensure transport, medical assistance and the whole commercial network”.

There followed ten key articles which established the direction to which Romania had to follow. From a political point of view, even from the very first article it was stated: “the abolishment of a single party leadership and the establishment of a democratic pluralistic governing system”. Thus, the socialist-totalitarian system which had been established in Romania since 1948 was put to an end and a new democratic regime was settled. For the validation of the new regime there were necessary free elections, during the month of April. An extremely important article mentioned: “the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers in the state” – one of the fundamental features of any democratic regime. Taking into consideration the situation created after 1948, the

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document mentioned “the election of all political leaders for one or at most two mandates. Nobody can pretend to have power for life”. The name of the country was Romania, giving up the title of “Republica Socialistă” (socialist republic) adopted in 1965 at Nicolae Ceaușescu’s proposal. At the same time, the constitution of a committee for the drawing up of the new Constitution was announced, to start work as soon as possible.

As regards the economy, they thought of “its restructuring” on the basis of “profitability and efficiency” criteria; they did not use the name of market economy but only that kind of economy relied on the criteria mentioned above. “The promotion of free initiative and competition in the leadership of all economic sectors” was required, the elimination of “administrative-bureaucratic methods of economic centralized management”. A distinctive element aimed at “the restructuring of agriculture and the support of the peasant small production”, which meant the abolishment of collectivization as it was made between 1949–1962, following important pressures and violence against the peasantry.

The document tackled the issues of education and culture as well. Education had to be reorganized “according to contemporary requirements. Education had to be reestablished on a democratic and humanist basis”. “Ideological dogma had to be eliminated as they produced so much damage to the Romanian people and the promotion of true humanity’s values was required”. Under the conditions of those days, the “dogmas” referred to the monopoly of dialectical and historic materialism, Marxism-Leninism ideology, imposed through the education law of 1948, as well as the opening to new values, irrespective of their ideological connotation. “The elimination of lies and imposture and the establishment of criteria of competence and justice in all domains of activity” meant the abandonment of one of the totalitarian society’s shortcomings, dominated by bias and arbitrary; the word “imposture” aimed at Elena Ceaușescu, who had become member of the Romanian Academy and “scientist of international renown” although her level of intellectual development was quite poor. The same idea was found in” the management of the press, the radio, the television from the hands of a tyrannical family to the hands of the people”; the family they referred to was that of Nicolae Ceaușescu. “The foundation of the national culture on a new basis” meant no politicization accepted. For national minorities it was required “the observance of rights and liberties” and “the insurance of complete equality in rights with the Romanians”. Taking into consideration the lack of food, heating and electricity, the

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communicate required “the organization of commerce starting from covering the basic needs of Romania’s population”; in order to do that “we will stop food export, we will reduce the export of oil products, concentrating on the people’s requirements of heating and electricity”.

As regards foreign policy the document included the promotion «of good neighborhood relations, friendship and peace in the world”, the observance of international agreements, first the ones regarding the Warsaw Pact. This Pact existed since 1955 and no member state had repudiated unilaterally\* so that Romania could not do it. At the same time, Romania was on the way to “access the process of constitution of one united Europe, the common European home of all the continent’s peoples”. The idea of a “common European home” was first launched by the French President Charles de Gaulle and later appropriated by other political leaders, including Mikhail Gorbachev.

The internal and foreign policy was subordinated to «the needs and interests of the development of the human being, the full observance of rights and liberties, including of the right of free movement”. They have been the Romanians’ desires for several decades, and “free movement”, including the right to emigrate was a very pressing demand for which western governments and the representatives of civil societies in the respective states campaigned for. Moreover, the communicate expressed the FSN will to “restore the civil society in Romania, guaranteeing the triumph of democracy, liberty, dignity for all the inhabitants of the country”.

From the analysis of this document we could conclude that, in Romania, the Revolution had a radical character from the very beginning, skipping a perestroika stage as in the other socialist countries. The whole foundation of the totalitarian state, starting with the single party was torn down and a pluralistic, democratic society was on its way<sup>70</sup>. Although the anti-communist character of the Revolution was not openly stated, this fact was clear from the wording in the communicate. The Romanian Communist Party, until then “the leading political force” disappeared in a de facto manner from the stage of history. In all the other socialist states, the communist parties had changed their name and continued to be in power, together with other political forces. In the Soviet Union, the Communist Party was still the only political governing party.

To go on, Ion Iliescu read the names of those who made up the FSN Council. There were well-known people who had adopted a critical attitude towards the policy promoted by Nicolae Ceaușescu: Doina Cornea, Ana

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Blandiana, Mircea Dinescu, Laszlo Tokes, Dumitru Mazilu, Dan Desliu, Aurel Dragos Munteanu and other intellectuals: Ion Caramitru, Sergiu Nicolaescu, Domokos Geza; former party activists who had been marginalized by Nicolae Ceaușescu: Corneliu Manescu, Alexandru Barladeanu, Silviu Brucan, Dan Martian; generals: Stefan Gusa, Victor Stănculescu; revolutionaries who just entered the political life: Petre Roman, Gelu Voican Voiculescu, Cazimir Ionescu, Mihai Montanu, Adrian Sarbu, Bogdan Teodoriu, a.s.o. As a whole 35 people, the “last on the list” according to his own expression being Ion Iliescu. Many of the above mentioned found out they were members in the council from the television programs. The fact that the document did not mention Timișoara at all and that the FSN council did not include any Timișoara representative created a state of frustration for the people in Banat which was going to deepen over the period to come.

The events eluded some of the provisions in the communicate. On the very day of December 22, 1989, Romania’s borders were opened, thus ensuring free movement in both directions (without a passport). It was a necessary measure, especially from a psychological point of view: the Romanians had desired free movement abroad for decades. On the one hand, when special events happen in a state, the borders are always close in order to control any movement in and out of the country very strictly. After December 22, in Romania there arrived hundreds of journalists as well as trucks with humanitarian aid for the population which were not customs checked. Under these conditions, different objects could be brought in the country, arms including, numerous people could enter freely, including spies.

It is possible the latter working hand in hand with former Romanian Securitate have contributed to the deepening of the tension in the country over the following period.

At the same time, it is possible that they had a role in the bankruptcy of many enterprises which were privatized for prices which did not cover the value of the land. It is clear that many “fake tycoons” who appeared after the revolution came from among former Securitate people.

For reasons still unknown, after the launching of the FSN communicate, the situation in the country kept worsening. There was a maddening atmosphere, the television spreading the rumor that terrorists who had pledged loyalty to Nicolae Ceaușescu did not want to lay down their arms and wanted to smother the revolution in bloodshed and to bring the former dictator back to power. Romania

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had changed into a war field where the army confronted the population on the one hand, with terrorists and Securitate on the other hand. It was stated that there was a scenario according to which the Securitate had to be blamed for the killings among the civilians and as a result it had to be dissolved, so that the Romanian state be left without an intelligence service, especially in those confusing moments. General Iulian Vlad outmaneuvered this plan by ordering all units and military in the Securitate to lay down their arms and not act in any way. Extremely confusing situations were created even in the headquarters of the Party Central Committee. Dumitru Mazilu would recall: "At 8:00 p.m., on the night of December 23/24 there arrived at the headquarters of the former CC PCR A COMMANDO (this is the form in the text). Several young people were shot between the eyes in the dark. The lights had been turned off."<sup>71</sup> Another participant in the revolution would write: "It was real madness at the CC. The light would go on and off and they would shoot at random. We wanted to go to the basement, as we were told that the terrorists would blow up the telephone call centre. We couldn't get down too many steps that we got fired at. We went to a room on the ground floor where a lot of people and many parachutists could be found. At a certain moment, the light went off. There was chaos. They started to shoot around the room."<sup>72</sup>

Due to this uncontrollable situation, there were such cases as the one in which an old lady coming from the market was supposed to have grenades in her shopping bag, another one had bullets – as a result they were retained by the revolutionaries; a young man wearing a training suit was sure to be a terrorist – as a result he was shot in the tramway stop in Piața Moghioroș (Moghioroș Square) – Drumul Taberei neighborhood (the person was rugby player Durbac from the CCA Sports Club – The Army Central House). A similar tragic end had the actor Horia Căciulescu who was heading towards Palatul Telefoanelor (The Telephone Palace) to talk to a relative who had come from abroad but he did not stop the car when summoned and got shot. The Romanian Free Television kept on broadcasting "terrorist" acts and even presented some terrorists who had been caught, being severely wounded; in hospital they were tied to the bed not to run away and later to be judged by the people.

In fact, besides the dispute which took place and still take place, something is still an enigma of the Romanian Revolution of December 1989. The army won, eventually, a war but they cannot say who they beat.

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Virgil Măgureanu, the first head of the Romanian Intelligence Service (1990 – 1997) stated in an interview for Dennis Deletant in December 1994, partially broadcast by BBC: "We don't have any data according to which this interference [foreign] really took place" but that: "Our supposition - and we have enough data to consider this supposition correct – it was then [in December 1989] and it is still today that they acted at the command of some people, from abroad, well equipped with armament and who got involved in the weakest points of the events in Bucharest and in the territory. Of course, their purpose was to create chaos and to lead to the worsening of the situation and of our internal balance. After which, on command again, they were withdrawn so that no traces could be found [of the terrorists]". According to him, it was a "concerted, well-managed action including the withdrawal without any traces, but I think it was impossible to do without accomplices from the inside"<sup>73</sup>.

In his turn, general prosecutor general Dan Voinea – the head of the military prosecutors' offices who investigated the Revolution files – stated at a symposia organized in Timișoara in December 1999: "We reached a surprising conclusion: that in fact there were no terrorists. So, until now, all military prosecutors' offices who had to investigate such cases did not find any person who was accused of terrorism", his conviction being that "the repression of December 1989 started by Ceaușescu and continued after December 22 1989 is, in fact, a violent reaction of the totalitarian state structures against the will for freedom and democracy first exposed in Timișoara and then <in the whole country>"<sup>74</sup> Coming back to the development of events on the night of December 22 1989, we mention that faced by attacks from the „ Securitate” the army got order to fire back, and thus there was continuous shooting. At a certain moment, a young man climbed on the building of the Palatul Republicii (the Republic Palace) with the intention to fly a flag without the coat of arms; some applauded him, some others shouted he is a terrorist, thus they started to fire at him Ion Caramitru's appeal – who had climbed a APC pretending to be a military commander – to stop the fire, was not obeyed. The Romanian revolution – broadcast live by the television, the images from Studio 4, alternating with the ones from the CC balcony while the main television stations in the world covered the events in Bucharest – got into a dramatic phase.

On December 24, by the decision of the FSN Council, the units of the ministry of the interior including the Securitate were integrated into the ministry

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of National Defense. However, the campaign against “the Securitate and terrorists” – blind instruments of Ceaușescu regime - went on.

In the memory of millions of viewers in the world there are still imprinted the images in the Cemetery for the Poor in Timișoara where a woman with her child were exposed, brutally killed by Ceaușescu’s Securitate as well as the body of a man severely mutilated lying on a cement table. The video cameras focused on other corpses, the Romanian Free Television reporter stating that they were only one small part from the Securitate victims: the respective people had been violently mutilated and then killed, after which they had been thrown into the poor’s grave and taken out from there just to show the viewers in what way the Ceaușescu regime acted. Then, such images and commentaries contributed to the strengthening of the spirit of revolt, to their decision to fight so that such a “vampire” could never come back in power.

The international press fell over themselves to describe the crimes of the Securitate. “La Libre Belgique” newspaper wrote that “there were found corpses in an indescribable state, hands and legs cut off, nails pulled out, heads half severed from the bodies, faces burnt with acid”. The Flemish newspaper “Blik” stated on December 27 that there were registered 100,000 dead people and in Timișoara “more than four thousand people were thrown into a huge grave. They had been undressed, taken all jewelry and watches away [...]. Before they were shot dead they had their arms and legs tied with barbed wire, their bodies tortured, their genitals torn away and crushed. Many were thrown in the grave still alive, then killed with hot water. After the Securitate ran away, the corpses were exhumed. Only in Timișoara, where the insurrection started, there were 12,000 dead citizens. [...] The Securitate shot 800 children. Among them, 45 were participating in a puppets show. The machine guns shot them dead” A doctor would have stated that he was operating on continuously: “We have to deal with 50,000 injured”<sup>75</sup>.

The people intensely watched the programs of the Free Romanian Television which broadcast the most alarming news: the Securitate and the terrorists infected the drinking water, they stole the blood reserve from the Emergency Hospital, they intended to blow up the dams and flood the cities, etc. The population was summoned to be vigilant, to defend the revolution, to fight against Securitate and terrorists. In many enterprises the citizens took the arms from the patriotic guards equipment, put a tricolored armband on, organized checking points in the streets and at the underground stations in order to get the

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Securitate and the armed terrorists. Posters with revolutionary slogans were placed on walls – slogans against Ceaușescu, considered to be like Hitler and Stalin – for a free, democratic Romania. Under the heading “Uniți, la arme” (united, come to arms!) in the *Scânteia poporului* (the People’s spark) of December 23 1989 there were such sentences: “The captured beast clung with its claws and teeth to the last supporting elements, hoping to succeed in bringing the horrendous dictatorship back to life. As it happened on the first day of the great fight, our army, the army of the people proved its courage and determination so necessary these days. Day and night, hour by hour, minute by minute, they surrender the terrorists, the gangs of Securitate who would not give in, dreaming about keeping their privileges, hoping some miracle might happen – only a miracle could save them. They would use any methods, would do typically fascist acts, shooting at random not only at the soldiers of our army but at the civilians, when occasion came, be it women, children, thus increasing the number of victims – already too many – among whom many peaceful people and especially young people. [...] Ceaușescu’s <killers>, these gangsters created according to the image of the dictatorship, still shoot dead many human lives. They hope for something beyond any hope. They count on the lost card of terror. The moment is serious and decisive. It is the moment of supreme mobilization, of the final battle. [...] Our most powerful weapons of each of us – military, workers, members of patriotic organizations, students, and people with civic spirit – are, during these decisive moments, responsibility, order and discipline, vigilance. Facing them, as they are more and more isolated, the terrorists, the professionals of death will be disarmed and terminated.”

In the leading article published in “*Scânteia poporului*” (the people’s spark) on December 23, entitled ‘*Traiasca libertatea, traiasca raspunderea!*’ (long live liberty, long live responsibility) it was written: “One of the most horrible dictatorships in the history of the Romanian people has ended. Under the pressure of the people, the dictator cowardly escaped justice”. The article continued with the evaluation of the Romania’s evolution: “We Romanians we don’t copy what some of our closer or more distant neighbors have done. The great demonstrations of the last days scanned for the dissolution of Ceaușescu’s dictatorship, for liberty, democracy and firmly pronounced for socialism, for the socialist, honest, clean principles, for people’s propriety, for the norms of real ethics and equity, untouched by Ceaușescu’s adventurous spirit and political demagogy, as well as of those who advised him for so long. Nobody has scanned down with socialism,

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but down with Ceaușescu's dictatorship. The first moments of victory were marked by a state of strong elation. On the radio, at television, there were presented opinions, short speeches, clearly incomplete in their contents, insufficiently clear as regards the country's future, economy, science, culture, political and social life - patriotic opinions influenced by strong feelings. What are we to do now, where are we heading? First, there is the need, as many said in their speeches, of a clarification of the political, social and economic program. And this could be done, under the conditions of pluralism of opinions. [ ..] We consider that it is more than necessary that party organizations debate freely, without any restraint from anybody the causes that led to the present political, social, economic situation and to decide on the road the party should follow. The conclusions of the communist democratic debates where, of course, everybody could participate if they wanted to support the process of socialist renewal, should be synthesized with great responsibility with a view to organizing an extraordinary party congress, called to define the key guidelines, the action plan for the achievement of socialist principles together with all progressive forces in Romania."

The appeal in «Scântea poporului» came too late. Such an article, published some 5 or 6 months before would have had a strong echo as it pleaded for a reform and a democratization of PCR (the Romanian Communist Party), for a socialism "with a human face". A party congress reunited after a debate "in complete liberty" would not have reelected Nicolae Ceaușescu as general secretary. This was the procedure chosen by communist parties in the other socialist countries, accepting to share power with other political forces. But now, at the end of December, the historical reality demonstrated that PCR could not longer come back and the Gorbachev-type reforms were no longer possible in the Romanian society. The FSN communicate had opened other higher opportunities.

On December 23, Lorin Fortună sent a message to the leadership of the National Salvation Front, message which was delivered by a specially designed group to Ion Iliescu, at the television building. The document had the following contents.

Taking into consideration the constitution of the National Salvation Front in the capital and the necessity to coordinate the fight for Romania's liberation, the Committee of the Romanian Democratic Front in Timișoara decides:

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1. Affiliation of the Romanian Democratic Front to the National Salvation Front program.

2. Integration of the Romanian Democratic Front in the National Salvation Front.

3. Inclusion of the Committee in Timișoara of the Romanian Democratic Front in the National Committee of the National Salvation Front.

4. The Committee of the National Salvation Front in Timișoara thus constituted is led by the following executive committee:

Lorin Fortună – chairman

Claudiu Iordache – vice-chairman

Mihaela Munteanu – secretary

Ștefan Ivan – member

Petrișor Morar – member<sup>76</sup>

In Bucharest, as in other cities in the country, fights continued: the forces seemed unbalanced: the terrorists, well trained and positioned in well chosen locations – on buildings, in inaccessible basements, after crosses in the cemeteries, at windows, etc. – were very efficient, shot from all positions, provoking numerous victims while the Romanian army hardly coped with the situation.

For one shot from one “terrorist”, the military answered with a hail of bullets which did much damage. Hundreds and thousands of citizens came to defend the television and the radio buildings which were in danger to be conquered by “terrorists.”<sup>77</sup>

At a certain moment, the “terrorists” went on the point of entering studio 4, the program was stopped, so they could no longer attack in the dark. When the program was resumed, Captain Mihai Lupoi appeared, in war equipment with a machine gun in his hands, assuring the viewers that no terrorist would enter the studio. The fights at the television building continued, the “terrorists” attacking from helicopters and shooting at the room on floor 11 where the members of the FSN Council were. Parachutists intervened, who had come from Boteni (Dâmbovița) and saved the situation. The radio building was subject to several

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attacks, as a result the building being surrounded by barricades and the revolutionaries defending it day and night.

There were tens of cases when military shot one another as well as revolutionaries shot innocent people with the pretext of being terrorists. The most serious incident was registered on December 23 at Otopeni Airport (Henri Coandă). In order to strengthen the defense of the airport Securitate troops were brought from Campina. Due to the fact that the respective unit had been attacked by “terrorists” the military got to Otopeni with a delay of seven hours; moreover, instead of following the established itinerary, the trucks headed to the airport; although warned, with fire shot in the air, the trucks did not stop and the military in the airport shot them down; there were 49 dead (one officer, two civilians and 34 conscripts from Câmpina) the others being from Bucharest<sup>78</sup>. As serious as the previous incident was the incident in Sibiu where an intense exchange of fire happened between the military in the headquarters of Militia and the military in the M.Ap.N. unit, as a result being 49 people dead and 472 injured<sup>79</sup>. Violent confrontations took place in Brasov, Buzau, Resita, Braila, etc. During the revolution 221 military were killed, 633 were injured, mainly due to mistakes in command and execution<sup>80</sup>.

Romania was the victim of an electronic war that the army could not outmaneuver. The radars showed attack helicopters and the missile units answered back, without any effect; in a short while, the targets appeared again. This fact amplified the panic, General Stefan Gușă himself – the chief of the General Staff – being overwhelmed by such events. He would state, in February 1990: “The cause of the psychological and radio-electronic war must be clarified, - war prepared, planned and fought during the revolution. Who fought? from the inside or from the outside ? As it attacked every level, schedules on days, hours and even minutes.”<sup>81</sup> When the archives in the Russian Federation, the US and France are opened this mystery – of the electronic war against Romania – will be clarified. Until then, we cannot clearly state that the Romanian army was not prepared to cope with such a war and did not have the necessary technique to find fake targets. We can suppose that it was a diversion action, made by foreign people, who were on Romania’s territory or launched from the outside. Then, most Romanians, including General Gușă appreciated that the “helicopters” came from Soviet space. There were many speculations about the possibility the new power had required military help from the Soviets. It is certain and proved with documents that on the night of December 22/23 1989 general Stefan Gușă, the

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chief of the General Staff, had a conversation with the Soviet general Moiseev to whom he communicated that he “did not require and he would not require Soviet military help.”<sup>82</sup> In reality, even if they asked for help, the help would not have been granted. A document<sup>83</sup> with “top secret” on it was presented to the Soviet Superior leadership, to Gorbachev inclusively, signed “CC secretary” and dated December 23 1989 which mentioned: “The TASS statement should be published regarding the fighting in Bucharest which represent a threat to the lives of Soviet citizens”. There was a statement attached which mentioned the attack on the building where the families of the Soviet Commercial branch were located: “Armed people entered the building and started to shoot from there. In the building fire started the lives of Soviet people, among whom women and children are endangered. The Soviet Union cannot remain indifferent to the fate of the Soviet citizens and urge those who started the above mentioned actions to stop them immediately”. The document also mentioned the appeal to the leadership of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria, the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia, the Hungarian Republic, the Democratic Republic of Germany, the People’s Republic of Poland, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia with the “proposal to establish permanent contacts and information exchanges with regard to the situation in Romania and around it. To propose to the allied states the organization of urgent consultations at foreign affairs ministers’ level. For this purpose the meeting could be in Warsaw”. Another proposal was “to establish direct and permanent contacts with the leadership of the Council of the National Salvation Front in Romania, first with Ion Iliescu”. This document, classified as “top secret”, discovered by the Romanian historian Ioan Chiper in the Russian Federation Archives proves how false the theory of some political analysts and politicians was according to which on December 22, 1989 there had been a coup d’etat organized by the Soviets.

Not before the next day did they suggest to the superior leadership in Moscow to establish direct and permanent contacts with the FSN leader. In a way – according to some – the scenario after 1944 was repeated, when they said that the act of August 23 had been “the deed of the Liberating Red Army” although they had no decisive role in King Michael I’s decision to arrest Ion Antonescu. In Annex 2 of the analyzed document the Statement of the Soviet Government was presented, the same which was broadcast by TASS news agency: “The information arriving from Romania demonstrate the Romanian people put a decisive end to the authoritarian regime and started on the road of democratic

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renewal of the country. The National Salvation Front was constituted, which unites all progressive forces in the country. The Front Council which assumed the whole power and addressed the people with the appeal to support the program they proclaimed regarding important changes.

In the country, with the active participation of the working forces, the process of formation of the new power structures is underway. The enemies of revolutionary changes try to resist, resorting to arms and without any consideration for the victims among the peaceful population.

The Soviet people demonstrate solidarity with the Romanian people who defend the ideals of liberty, democracy and national dignity.

The USSR government supports the efforts of the FSN Council directed to the establishment of peace and order in the country. The Soviet Union is ready to offer the Romanian people, the new leadership of the country, immediate and effective humanitarian aid for the elimination of the damages in the aftermath of the tragic events of the last days”.

On December 23 1989, during a break of the USSR People’s Deputies Congress, premier N. Ridjkov, answering the questions of a journalist stated that “it would a big mistake to send Soviet troops in Romania, as it is known that the sending of troops to Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan has been recently condemned.”<sup>84</sup>

However paradoxical it may seem, in December 1989, the intervention of the Soviet troops in Romania was required by western governments, first by France and the US. On December 24 1989, Roland Dumas, the minister of foreign affairs of France stated on television that « all those motivated by the situation in Romania have the urge to fight. That is why there should be <urgent intervention > and the principle of non-interference should be abolished to defend human rights. The situation in Romania imposes the introduction of this notion in the international judicial glossary ». He stated that France would approve a USSR and Warsaw Pact member states intervention to which, as a Great Power his country could also contribute. This <urgent intervention> could be made under the form of an international brigade”<sup>85</sup>. A similar opinion expressed Jacques Chirac, the mayor of Paris. Moreover, he stated that president Francois Mitterrand, as chairman-in-office of the Economic European Community “has to require the USSR to send military material to the Romanian army together with the EEC member states.”<sup>86</sup>

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The French television station announced that U.S. State Secretary James Baker expressed his agreement, a few hours later, with the French foreign affairs minister supporting a military intervention of the USSR and of the Warsaw Pact member states to Romania<sup>87</sup>.

These public statements that hundreds of thousands of viewers heard were later on never mentioned again. Out of unknown reasons, the idea was launched that there was a Soviet intervention in Romania in December 1989 and that there had been no revolution but a coup d'état managed by KGB. In Czechoslovakia was a peaceful revolution "a velvet" one, while the Romanians got fooled by the USSR secret services. But documents cannot be denied or manipulated.

On December 24, I. P. Aboimov received the American ambassador to Moscow, Jack Matlock at the latter's request. The ambassador stated he had instructions from Washington for an opinion exchange with the Soviet party regarding the events in Romania: "The American party is very concerned about the fact that both the conflict between the Securitate forces and the army units as well as the number of victims belonging to the civil population still go on". The vocabulary of the American diplomat suggests there was a scenario that had been put to work but which was surpassed by the concrete evolution of the events in Romania where there no mention of "Securitate" any longer but of "terrorists". On the very day of December 24 the Securitate units had been taken over by the army. Jack Matlock wanted to know "what the most efficient way of supporting the Romanian people and Romania's leadership could be" and "if military support offered by the USSR to the National Salvation Front in Romania was completely out of the question". He stated that "under these circumstances an involvement on the part of the Soviet Union would not be regarded in the context of the <Brezhnev Doctrine>", namely the right of the Red Army to intervene in socialist countries. Aboimov reiterated the USSR position formulated very clearly in the statement of the Soviet government, mentioning they did not take into consideration a military intervention. "We are against any interference in the internal affairs of other states and we intend to follow firmly this line, without any deviations"<sup>88</sup>. Somewhat ironically, the Soviet diplomat said "the American party could consider the <Brezhnev doctrine> a gift from us". The allusion was at the US intervention in Panama that was going on at that time, the American army overthrowing Manuel Noriega, unaccepted by Washington.

On December 25, 1989, I. P. Aboimov held a press conference where he read the statement on behalf of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the

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document stated “the Soviet government has permanent and consultancy connections with the governments of the member states of the Warsaw Pact, exchanges information with them. Both the USSR and its allies support the revolutionary renewals in Romania, the efforts of the National Salvation Front”. The document expressed the conviction that the Romanian people will obtain the victory in its fight for freedom and democracy and “any form of collective action which might bring memories of the past should be avoided. The USSR has exchanges of opinion with other states concerning the situation in Romania, at present solidarity with the Romanians being a moral duty of the world community”<sup>89</sup>.

I. P. Aboimov revealed that in the discussion he held on December 24 with the US ambassador to Moscow he exchanged information and appreciations regarding the evolution of the events in Romania and the US State Secretary, as well as the foreign affairs ministers of France and the United Kingdom stated they would understand the USSR’s reasons for “sending military help to Romania, together with other Warsaw Pact allies to defend the people’s power”. The position of the Soviet government to such suggestions was expressed as follows:” The USSR stated that they would not intervene in the internal affairs of another state, be it an allied state or not. The USSR not only expressed such a principle, but they also observe it. The Soviet party is aware of the statement made by the US Secretary of State in connection to the issue of interference in the internal affairs of another state. It is necessary to prove special precaution, not only in action but in statements as well”<sup>90</sup>. In his turn, the foreign affairs minister Eduard Schevardnadze appreciated that the western suggestion was “not only sinister but at least stupid”<sup>91</sup>, as any intervention on the part of the Soviet Union would turn Ceaușescu into a martyr<sup>92</sup>. We could see it was a strange situation, the great democracies requiring the Soviet Union military intervention in Romania and the latter refusing such request and urging the western countries to” be careful”. In the same press conference, Aboimov stated that the Soviet Union established links with the Council of the National Salvation Front but that Gorbachev had not contacts with its representatives<sup>93</sup>.

While, on an international plan such discussions took place, Romania seemed to head to a civil war. The Romanian television and the radio, as well as foreign journalists contributed to the amplification of the tension and panic, broadcasting live the confrontations between the army and “the terrorists”, the fires that broke out (in the University Central Library, National Art Museum,

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a.s.o), images with the wounded in hospitals who were interviewed, although some of them could barely speak, etc. No professional ethics worked any more, the rush for the sensational, the sadistic pleasure to transmit “the war” in Romania in order to get rating, all television stations were in it.

The nightmarish images broadcast from Bucharest generated a strong international solidarity with the Romanian people. The Council of the National Salvation Front received messages from heads of state and governments, of foreign affairs ministers in which they expressed their support and sympathy. From many countries, there started aids to come, consisting of drugs, food, clothes, a.s.o.

Such aid came from Basarabia as well (The Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova) and from north Bucovina (the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine), fact which resulted in the awakening of the national feeling, after four decades and a half of no direct, soul relations between the Romanians on the left and the right part of the Prut<sup>94</sup>.

The leadership of the FSN Council reached the conclusion that the fights will not stop as long as Ceaușescu was alive. It was considered that there were people (Securitate, terrorists) who had pledged loyalty to the state leader and they could not be denied this loyalty unless they found out that the former president did no longer live. The one who mostly supported this point of view was Gelu Voican Voiculescu while Ion Iliescu hesitated. Petre Roman would explain: “We should mention the fact that at that moment, the revolution was not totally victorious. At any moment something could have happened to throw everything over and the dictator who was still alive represented a serious danger.”<sup>95</sup>

On the night of December 24, Ion Iliescu signed, as chairman of the Council of the National Salvation Front the decree through which the Extraordinary Military Tribunal was set up, with the mission to judge “the extremely serious deeds performed by citizens Ceaușescu Nicolae and Ceaușescu Elena, dismissed from state and political functions by the revolutionary action of the masses” Judgment as a matter of great urgency “is imposed by the desire of all the honest citizens of Romania”. It was mentioned the fact that the Extraordinary Military Tribunal will judge “ according to the legal provisions still in power, as regards the procedure and the criminal law” that they will “ ensure the right to defense of the perpetrators”<sup>96</sup>.

The concern about observing the legal norms was superficial, as the sentence has already been decided: general Stănculescu dealt with all aspects

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regarding the organization of the trial, he even brought the platoon from Boteni to Târgoviște, platoon that was going to execute Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu. On the morning of December 25, the judges were transported by helicopter from Bucharest to Târgoviște. It was made up of Colonel of Justice Gica Popa – chairman; Colonel of Justice Ioan Nistor – judge; Major of Justice Dan Voinea – military prosecutor; Captain Corneliu Sorescu – Lieutenant –Major Daniel Condrea and Lieutenant Ion Zamfir – people’s assessors; Sergeant Major Jan Tanasa – bailiff. There were also nominated counsel for the defense: lawyer Nicolae Teodorescu and lawyer Constantin Lucescu<sup>97</sup>. Regarding the manner in which this trial was organized Lucescu’s statements are significant: “I have never known where we would land – the locality or the name of the locality. As I did not know which the terrorists were or who was to be sent to the trial”<sup>98</sup>.

The trial took place in a room in the military unit where Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu had been retained since the day of December 22. As audience there were general Stănculescu, Gelu Voican Voiculescu, Virgil Măgureanu, Mugurel Florescu, Ion Baiu a.s.o. Even before the beginning of the trial, general Stănculescu had chosen the place where the two were to be executed (a wall on the premises of the military unit). At the trial, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu were accused through the indictment read by Major Dan Voinea:

“1) of genocide – over 60,000 victims;

2) of undermining of state power through the organization of armed actions against the people and the state power:

3) of the crime of destruction of common goods, through the destruction and damage of certain buildings, explosions in towns, etc.;

4) of national economy undermining”<sup>99</sup>

The accusations were not formulated on the basis of investigation and evidence, which should have been attached to the culprits’ file. The two were accused of the same crime, although, in any trial, responsibilities are individual. Major Dan Voinea expressed a state of spirit, offering the necessary arguments for the application of capital punishment. The trial was, indeed, an exceptional one; even the defense lawyers turned into prosecutors, stating that “they did the two defendants the honor” to defend them. Nicolae Ceaușescu held the position of not acknowledging the Extraordinary Military Tribunal, considering he was president of the Socialist Republic of Romania and according to the Constitution he could

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not be held accountable but by the Great National Assembly. He appreciated that the process was a “masquerade” directed by those who “had organized the coup d’etat”. When the judge asked “Who ordered to have the crowds shot at?” he answered that nobody fired in the Piața Palatului (Palace Square), “on the contrary, there had been clear orders not to fire”; according to his opinion “the people is fighting in the country to eliminate this gang of country traitors who, together with foreign countries organized the coup d’etat”<sup>100</sup>. However, addressing those who accused him as “ordinary citizens”, Ceaușescu gave some answers which proved difficult to refute both by the judges and the prosecutor as, being under much stress, could not find the right arguments. As they were used to apply “the socialist law” and had been trained to respect the head of state, but knowing that they had “a task” to accomplish, they raised their voice, spoke all at once, made gratuitous appreciations – the one according to which they had found in Zoe Ceaușescu’s house a golden scale which she used to weigh the meat brought from abroad. When the prosecutor said they had an account of 400,000 dollars in Switzerland, Elena Ceaușescu replied “Let’s see the proof! the proof!” When the prosecutor said that she could not read, the latter replied: “If only the intellectuals and my academia colleagues could hear you”; when the prosecutor appreciated “the illiterate was a scholar”, Elena Ceaușescu asked “Should he talk like that?” From Nicolae Ceaușescu’s attitude it was not clear if he was convinced that he would be executed or he would go back in power. He appreciated that the Romanian people would fight „to the elimination of that gang which together with foreign countries organised the coup d’etat” and he would talk „publicly about this matter as often as needed”. In connection to general Milea’s death, Ceaușescu stated: “I will order an investigation to see if he committed suicide.” Prosecutor Dan Voinea appreciated that the trial was too long, that is why he addressed the panel: Mr. Chairman, if this paranoid defendant has no account in Switzerland, let us end with him, as it seems we cannot understand one another”. The trial ended in less than two hours, the panel announcing the sentence to death and confiscation of all possessions. Lawyer Teodorescu wanted to mention “the decision is final”. Nicolae Ceaușescu said: “Who organized the coup d’etat can shoot anybody”. As they did not acknowledge the Extraordinary Military Tribunal, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu filed no appeal, thus the sentence was final. Immediately after the trial, the two were tied with their hands at the back and pushed to the wall already chosen; without any order, the execution platoon opened fire, shooting them down with a hail of bullets.

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On that day of Christmas, at about 2:50 p.m., the most hated people in Romania were liquidated through the decision of the Extraordinary Military Tribunal and with the arms of the military brought from Boteni. Their bodies were taken to Bucharest by helicopter and after being kept over the night of December 25/26 on the Ghencea stadium, they were transported to the Central Military Hospital where they were to stay until December 30. On that day, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu would be buried in different graves in the Ghencea Civil Cemetery. The one in charge of the operation was Gelu Voican Voiculescu.

On the night of December 25, the radio and television station announced that Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu's trial had taken place, after presenting the accusations\*. The communicate ended with the following words: "For these serious crimes, undertaken against the Romanian people and Romania, defendants Ceaușescu Nicolae and Ceaușescu Elena were sentenced to death and wealth confiscation. The sentence was final and it was executed".

The night of December 25/26 the national television channel broadcast the tape with the trial and death of the Ceaușescu's. It was first "edited", so that the people involved in the trial and execution could not be seen: only the two could be seen and the voices of those in the panel could only be heard. The tape ended with the image of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu, lying dead next to the wall in the yard of the military unit.

The complete tape, including the burial was to be broadcast on April 22, 1990.

What is clear is that on the night of December 25, viewers – including "terrorists" – could be convinced that Ceaușescu was dead. It was not a normal trial but a "kangaroo" one which affected some of those who took part in the decision to sentence the former head of state and his wife. The most affected was the chairman of the panel, Gica Popa, who graduated to the rank of general who experienced a serious breakdown and some months after the trial committed suicide. After the announcement of the Ceaușescu's elimination, violence instances reduced in intensity and at the beginning of January they stopped completely.

Nicolae Ceaușescu was the only communist leader who was physically eliminated, fact which raises many questions: Anneli Ute Gabanyi could find an explanation: "Romania was the only country in the Soviet bloc where the head of the party and state was executed. Why? Because Romania was the only country within the dead Soviet system where Moscow's armed forces and security forces

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did not have, as it was the case in the other eastern-European countries, direct political instruments. Only in Romania the head of state had at the same time the position of Supreme Commander of the Army and the army was not subordinated directly to the military leadership of the Warsaw Pact as happened in the case of the other states' armies, satellite states of Moscow."<sup>101</sup>

According to our opinion, this could be one of the explanations, but not the only one. The list is still open for other questions. Could Ceaușescu's murder be „a reaction to the defiance he expressed to the Soviet Union and the western countries, especially over the last years of the <Ceaușescu epoch>? Could it have been <the well-deserved> punishment for the total liquidation of Romania's foreign debt (in April 1989) thus Ceaușescu wanting to prevent any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of the country? Could it have been jealousy for the international prestige he had acquired, in the 70's? Could it have been a lesson for all those who would promote nationalism as a state policy? Might he have known too much and that is why he had to be stopped from talking into an authentic trial? Or maybe he should not have spoken about those he had met during his life?"<sup>102</sup>

Obviously, these questions and still more will get an answer in time, but then, in December 1989, the world was relieved that the „tyrant”, the „ anti-Christ”, the „criminal” was killed. Romania could get its peace back, and its citizens could no longer be victims of the terrorists who wanted to bring him back in power.

On December 26, the first government of the Revolution was constituted, presided by Petre Roman, a young lecturer at the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest. After more than a decade, he would confess: „I started my career suddenly and unexpectedly. Due to my involvement in those days of December 1989, in the fights that followed the fall of the totalitarian regime, I found myself, I repeat, absolutely unexpectedly propelled to the position of prime-minister of Romania, of the provisional government. Then I did not know I was going to get into politics and I didn't think I would remain in politics. I had never dreamt of being nominated for high positions”<sup>103</sup>.

The Romanian Revolution was made with much human sacrifice. The figures are the following: 1,104 people dead, 3,321 injured. Among them, there were military of the Romanian army: 221 dead and 633 injured<sup>104</sup> out of whom 116 officers, 69 warrant officers and non-commissioned officers, 423 students and conscripts, 15 civilian employees:<sup>105</sup> most of the military died in Bucharest (114),

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Brasov (12), Buzau (11), Resita (8), Braila (10), Constanta (9), Timișoara (8) and Sibiu (8)<sup>106</sup>.

There is no statistics regarding the victims of the revolution according to sex, nationality, age, profession, political belief. Until such statistics is finished, we could get an idea about such matters by reading the statistics put together by the Ministry of the Interior where they mention that “in Timișoara, between December 17 – 21, 1989, there were 376 victims, dead and wounded, both among the demonstrators and the law enforcing forces. From the first category there were 73 dead out of which 72 after being shot, one after being run over by a vehicle. Out of the total of the victims, 306 were males and 70 females, 313 being residents of Timișoara and 56 in other localities in the country. A number of 7 victims remained unidentified. As regards their profession, 185 were workers, 24 pupils, 13 military, 12 pensioners, 9 clerks, 7 students, 6 housewives, 3 engineers, 2 doctors, 1 teacher, 1 minor pre-school kid and 113 without occupation (or it could not be established). As regards age: 133 were between 15 – 25, 120 were between 25 – 35, 81 between 35 – 45, 34 were over 45 years old and 8 were up to 15 years old. Out of the victims, 30 were shot in the head, 55 shot in the chest, 38 shot in the stomach, 46 shot in the arms and 153 shot in the leg and 8 in other parts of the body”<sup>107</sup>.

Another statistics refers to the number of people arrested in Timișoara. The Timișoara Military Prosecutors’ Office communicated on August 22 1994 that in the period 16 – 22 December 1989 978 people were retained, out of whom 944 in the Timișoara Penitentiary, 33 in the Militia Inspectorate and one person in the military unit<sup>108</sup>. According to the records of the Ministry of the Interior there were 832 people retained between December 16 – 19”<sup>109</sup>. The total of persons: - 832; male – 700; female – 132; according to nationality: Romanians – 716; Hungarians – 82; Germans – 19; Serbian – 4; Slovakian – 2; Jewish – 1; other nationalities – 8. Age: between 18 – 25 – 467; between 25 – 35 – 224; between 35 – 40 – 98; over 45 – 43. Professions : workers – 535; students – 86; engineers – 19; clerks – 19; housewives – 11; pensioners – 7; higher technicians – 4; teachers – 2; conscripts – 2; architects – 1; doctors – 1 ; without occupation – 29; other categories – 116. Political belief: PCR members – 53; UTC members – 413; no party allegiance – 366. ”

The analyzed data show that most of the participants were men. The number of young people, those who were born and shaped during socialist years was overwhelming; they did not feel attached to this regime, but they sacrificed

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themselves to put it down. As profession, first were the workers, fact which shows the falsity of the official theory according to which they would have represented the leading class in the state, loyal to the regime. This conclusion results from the political membership- first, there were UTC members, most of them born during the “Ceaușescu epoch”. Almost 70% of the arrested ones were UTC and PCR members, which demonstrate the gap between the official leadership and the members of the so-called communist organization. The structure on nationalities shows that citizens of all nationalities fought against the totalitarian regime: Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Serbians, etc.

December 1989 meant the end of a chapter in Romania’s history, in European history and even of the world in general<sup>110</sup>; the downfall of the Ceaușescu regime and of totalitarian socialism in Romania was not the result of a palace conspiracy, of the action of a limited group of people but the fruit of a real revolution, the most ample and dramatic in the Europe of that year. Due to numberless reasons – among which the hardness of the regime, the omnipresence of Securitate, the cowardice of the party officials surrounding Ceaușescu, the lack of an ample reforming or dissident movement, the absence of the civil society – in Romania it was not possible to overthrow the dictatorship and go back to democracy through discussions at “the round table” or through a “velvet revolution”; what was necessary was the revolt of the population, first of the workers in the big cities, confrontation with the repression forces, sacrifice of over 1,100 people. That December 1989, Europe and the whole world supported the Romanians, admiring them for their courage and their heroism, for their determination to live free in a democratic society.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See, Ioan Scurtu, *The Romanian Revolution 1989. Third edition, revised and enlarged*, Redacția Publicațiilor pentru Străinătate, București 2009, pp. 196- 255.

<sup>2</sup> *Newspaper Scânteia*, of December 2, 1989

<sup>3</sup> *Sfârșitul dictaturii. 21 - 25 decembrie 1989* [The end of the dictatorship. 21- 25 December 1989], Editor Ioan Scurtu, pp. 30-32

<sup>4</sup> *Principiul Dominoului. Prăbușirea regimurilor comuniste europene. Documente* [The Domino Theory. The Fall of the European Communist Regimes. Documents]. By Dumitru Preda and Mihai Retegan, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 2000, p.478.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 479.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 480.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 482.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 480.

<sup>10</sup> Gheorghe E. Cojocaru, *1989 la Est de Prut* [1989 East of the Prut], Chișinău, Editura Prut International, 2001, p. 198-199.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> Sergiu Nicolaescu, *Lupta pentru putere. Decembrie 1989*, [The struggle for power. December 1989], București, Editura All, p.125.

<sup>13</sup> National Historical Archives of Romania. Archives of the RCP Chancellery, file 388/1989, p. 27-35.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 513

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34-36

<sup>16</sup> *Șase zile care au zguduit România. Ministerul de Interne în decembrie 1989. Pledoarie pentru istorie*, [Six days that shook Romania. The ministry of the Interior during December 1989. Plea for history] vol. I, Editor Division General Ion Pitulescu, București, Tipografia Luceafărul, 1995, pp. 174-175.

<sup>17</sup> Sergiu Nicolaescu, *Lupta pentru putere...*, [The struggle for power], p. 150.

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<sup>18</sup> Constantin Sava and Constantin Monac, *Revoluția Română din Decembrie 1989. Retrăită prin documente și mărturii* [The Romanian Revolution of December 1989. Relived through documents and testimonies], București, Editura Axonia, 2001, p. 542.

<sup>19</sup> Sergiu Nicolaescu, *Lupta pentru putere...*, [The struggle for power], p. 168.

<sup>20</sup> Alesandru Duțu, *Revoluția română din Decembrie 1989. Cronologie* [The Revolution of December 1989. Chronology], București, Editura Institutului Revoluției Române din Decembrie 1989, 2006, p. 183-184.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 185.

<sup>22</sup> *Sfârșitul dictaturii...*, [The end of dictatorship], pp. 38-39.

<sup>23</sup> *Armata română în revoluția din decembrie 1989*, p. 112 [The Romanian Army in the December 1989 Revolution], Editura Costache Codrescu, București, Editura Militară, 1998, p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> Ilie Verdeț, *In memoriam*, f.a., pp. 86-87.

<sup>25</sup> *Stenograma din 22 decembrie 1989 (Ședința C.P.Ex. - în sediul Comitetului Central al P.C.R.)*, în Sergiu Nicolaescu, *Lupta pentru putere...*, p. 289; [The shorthand report of December 22 1989 - the CPEX meeting within the Central Committee building- in Sergiu Nicolaescu, *The struggle for power ...*, p. 289]; Constantin Sava and Constantin Monac, *op. cit.* p. 78-81; "Clio 89", no. 1/2007, p. 147-151.

<sup>26</sup> *Generalul revoluției cu piciorul în ghips*. Dinu Săraru în dialog cu Victor Atanasie Stănculescu. Interviu -fișe pentru un posibil roman, [The general of the revolution. Dinu Săraru in dialogue with Victor Atanasie Stănculescu], București, Editura RAO, 2005, pp. 40-41.

<sup>27</sup> Cristian Troncotă, *Duplicitarii*, [Doubledealers], București, Editura Elion, 2003, p. 214.

<sup>28</sup> Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Istoria loviturilor de stat în România*, [The history of coups d'état in Romania] vol. 4, București, Editura RAO, 2004, p. 409.

<sup>29</sup> Teodor Brateș, *Trilogia revoluției române în direct. Câteva zile din viață*, vol. I. *22 decembrie 89 în studioul 4 al TVR*, [The Trilogy of the Romanian Revolution Live. Some days of my life], București, Editura Ager-Economistul, 2004, p. 86.

<sup>30</sup> *Documente din arhivele rusești*, [Documents in the Russian archives], in "Diplomaticeskii Vestnic", no. 21-22 of november, 1994.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>32</sup> *Martor al revoluției: Coen Stork, fost ambasador al Olandei în România (1988-1993)*, [Witness of the revolution: Coen Stork former ambassador of The Netherlands to Romania] in „22 Magazine”, din 24 decembrie 2007 - 7 ianuarie 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Ștefan Dinu, *Ce am făcut, ce am văzut, ce am auzit, ce știu sigur*, What I have done, what I have seen, what I have heard, what I know for sure] în „*Dosarele istoriei*”, nr. 12/2006, p. 39.

<sup>34</sup> Constantin Sava and Constantin Monac, *Revoluția română*, [The Romanian Revolution], p. 206.

<sup>35</sup> *Sfârșitul dictaturii...*, [The End of Dictatorship], p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> *Generalul Revoluției...*, [The Revolution Generation], p. 53.

<sup>37</sup> *Principiul dominoului...*, [The Domino Theory], pp. 484 – 485.

<sup>38</sup> Emanuel Valeriu, *Fața necunoscută a “Europei Libere”*, București, [The unknown face of Radio Free Europe], Editura Lumina Lex, 2001, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> *Martor al revoluției...*, [Witness of the revolution], loc. cit.

<sup>40</sup> See Teodor Brateș, *Explozia unei clipe. 22 decembrie 1989 - o zi în studioul 4*, [The explosion of a moment. 22 December 1989 - a day in studio 4] București, Editura Scripta, 1992.

<sup>41</sup> Constantin Sava and Constantin Monac, *Revoluția Română*, [The Romanian Revolution], pp. 308-309.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 309.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>44</sup> See, also, Ioan Scurtu, „*Lovitura de stat“ a generalului Stănculescu*, [General Stănculescu's coup d'etat] în „*Historia*“, iunie 2006.

<sup>45</sup> *Generalul Revoluției*, [The General of the Revolution], pp. 45-46.

<sup>46</sup> *Buletinul Oficial al Republicii Socialiste România*“, [The Official Gazette], nr. 45 din 28 martie 1974

<sup>47</sup> Cercetător științific dr. Alexandru Oșca, *Conducerea acțiunilor militare și angajarea forțelor armatei în Revoluția din Decembrie 1989*, in „*Caietele Revoluției*”, [The Leadership of military actions and the involvement of army forces in the revolution of December 1989], nr. 1/2007, p. 56.

\* Actually, Cico Dumitrescu was never, under any circumstances „a colleague” of Ion Iliescu's.

<sup>48</sup> *Revoluția română în direct*, [The Romanian Revolution, live], București, 1990, p. 40.

<sup>49</sup> Ion Iliescu, *Revoluția Română...*, [The Romanian Revolution] pp. 38-39.

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<sup>50</sup> *E un început în tot sfârșitul... Culegere selectivă din programele radiodifuzate în zilele de 17 - 25 decembrie 1989*, [There is a beginning in every end.. Selective anthology of radio programs of 17-25 December 1989], București, Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune, 1998, p. 183.

<sup>51</sup> *Marele șoc în finalul unui secol scurt...*, [The big shock at the end of a short century...], p. 188.

<sup>52</sup> *Generalul Revoluției ...*, [The General of the Revolution], pp. 56-59.

<sup>53</sup> Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Istoria loviturilor de stat în România*, [The History of Coups d'Etat in Romania], vol. 4, partea a II-a, p. 528.

<sup>54</sup> *E un început...*, [It's a beginning], p. 182

<sup>55</sup> *Condamnat la adevăr ...*, [Condemned to tell the truth], p. 73.

\* On February 15 1990, general Nicolae Military as minister of National Defense approved general Gusa to be arrested, accused of genocide - photocopy of the document could be found in the Archives of the Institute of the Romanian Revolution of December 1989.

<sup>56</sup> *E un început...*, [It's a beginning], p. 181.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 230.

<sup>58</sup> Constantin Sava and Constantin Monac, *Revoluția Română...*, [The Romanian Revolution], p. 315-322.

<sup>59</sup> Teodor Brateș, *Trilogia revoluției...*, [The trilogy of the revolution] vol. I, p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 227.

<sup>61</sup> Peter Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989*, Haga and London, 2005, p. 114.

<sup>62</sup> Petre Roman, *Libertatea ca datorie...*, [Freedom as duty], pp. 119-120.

<sup>63</sup> *Față în față cu Petre Roman. 9 convorbiri cu Vartan Arachelian...*, [Face to face to Petre Roman, 9 interviews with Vartan Arachelian..], p. 108.

\* It is about Liviu Petrina.

<sup>64</sup> *Mărturisiri. Corneliu Coposu în dialog cu Vartan Arachelian*, [Statements. Corneliu Coposu interviewed by Vartan Arachelian], București, Editura Humanitas, 1996, p. 156.

<sup>65</sup> Transcrierea înregistrării video, în Stelian Țurlea, *Revoluția în oglindă*, București, Editura Fundației PRO - [The transcript of the video recording in Stelian Țurlea, The revolution in the mirror].

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<sup>66</sup> Dumitru Mazilu în dialog cu Vasile Popa. *Calvarul virtuții*, [Dumitru Mazilu talkig to Vasile Popa] Timișoara, Editura Aura, 2002, 139.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 140.

<sup>68</sup> Dumitru Mazilu, *De la totalitarism la libertate. Revoluția furată. Memoriu pentru țara mea*, [From totalitarianism to freedom. The stolen revolution. Memorandum for my country] vol. I - *Acele zile și nopți de dramatism și speranță*, [Those days and those nights of dramatism and hope], București, Editura Cozia, 1991, p. 48.

<sup>69</sup> Vezi și textul acestuia în “*Monitorul oficial*” nr. 1 din 22 decembrie 1989 și în “*Caietele Revoluției*”, nr. 2/2005, p. 18-22.[see the text in the *Official Gazette* no.1 of December 22 1989 and in the *Revolution Notebooks* no 2/2005, pp.18-22].

\* Albania was an exception as they withdrew in 1968 from this body.

<sup>70</sup> A comparative analysis of the Timișoara Proclamation of December 20 and the communicate to the country of the National Salvation Council of 22 December in Ioan Scurtu [Two fundamental moments of the Romanian revolution of December 1989] în „*Caietele Revoluției*”, nr.1/2006, p. 19-23.

\* Albania was an exception as they withdrew in 1968 from this body.

<sup>70</sup> A comparative analysis of the Timișoara Proclamation of December 20 and the communicate to the country of the National Salvation Council of 22 December in Ioan Scurtu [Two fundamental moments of the Romanian revolution of December 1989] în „*Caietele Revoluției*”, nr.1/2006, p. 19-23.

<sup>71</sup> Prof. univ. dr. Dumitru Mazilu, *Cum am devenit critic al violării drepturilor omului în țara mea în anii 1985-1989*, [How I became a critic of the violation of human rights in my country between 1985 - 1989] în “*Clio 89*”, nr. 1/2007, p. 157.

<sup>72</sup> Romulus Cristea, *Revoluția din 1989*, [The revolution of 1989], București, Editura Română pur și simplu, 2006, p. 17.

<sup>73</sup> Dennis Deletant, *Fragmente ale unui adevăr. Televiziunea BBC și Revoluția Română, în Întrebări cu și fără răspuns. Decembrie 1989*, [Fragments of the truth. BBC television and the Romanian revolution] în Memorialul Revoluției. Volum îngrijit de Iosif Costinaș, Timișoara, Editura Mirton, 2001, p. 46-50.

<sup>74</sup> Dan Voinea, *Sinteza parchetelor militare despre Revoluție și dosarele Revoluției în lucru*, [Synthesis of the military prosecutors offices about the revolution and the revolution files under investigation], *Ibidem*, p. 120-125.

<sup>75</sup> *Apud* Sergiu Nicolaescu, *Lupta pentru putere ...* [The struggle for power], p. 39.

<sup>76</sup> „*Martor ocular*“, [Eye witness] nr. 2 din decembrie 1999, p. 50

<sup>77</sup> *Revoluția română în direct*, [The Romanian Revolution live], p. 116-118.

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<sup>78</sup> Sergiu Nicolaescu, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 340.

<sup>80</sup> Dr. Alesandru Duțu, *Armata română în situații de criză: februarie 1945/Decembrie 1989*, [The Romanian army in crisis; February 1945/December 1989] în „Caietele Revoluției”, nr.1/2006, p. 57

<sup>81</sup> *Condamnat la adevăr...* [Condemned to tell the truth..], p. 36.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 504.

<sup>83</sup> Ioan Chiper, *Documente privind poziția conducerii U.R.S.S. față de revoluția română (23 -24 decembrie 1989)*, [Documents regarding the USSR leadership position towards the Romanian revolution - 23 - 24 December 1989] în *Clio 1989*, nr. 1 - 2/2005, pp. 204-206.

<sup>84</sup> *Principiul dominoului*, [ The Domino Theory ], p. 491.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 492.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 493.

<sup>87</sup> Vezi, pe larg, Michael R. Beschloss și Strobe Talbott, *La cele mai înalte nivele*, [At the highest level], București, Editura Elit, 1994.

<sup>88</sup> *Documente din arhivele rusești*, [Documents of the Russian archives], *loc. cit.*

<sup>89</sup> *Principiul dominoului...*, [The Domino Theory], p. 495-496.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 496.

<sup>91</sup> Eduard Șevardnadze, *Opțiunea mea...*, [My Way] p. 9.

<sup>92</sup> Alexandru-Radu Timofte, *Originile, mărirea, declinul și renașterea lumii informațiilor secrete*, [The origins, the growth and decrease and renaissance of the secret services world], 2004, p. 120.

<sup>93</sup> *Principiul dominoului...*, [The Domino Theory], p. 497.

<sup>94</sup> Mihai Iacobescu, *Descătușarea: noua putere politică și românii din spațiul sovietic (decembrie 1989-decembrie 1990)*, [The release: the new political power and the Romanians in the Soviet area - December 1989 - December 1990] în “*Clio 1989*”, nr. 1/2007, p. 99-125.

<sup>95</sup> Petre Roman, *Libertatea ca datorie...*, [ Freedom as a duty] pp. 124-125.

<sup>96</sup> „*România liberă*” din 26 decembrie 1989.

<sup>97</sup> *Istoria României în date* [Romania's history in dates], Editor Dinu C. Giurescu, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2003, p. 745.

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<sup>98</sup>Vartan Arachelian, *În fața Dumneavoastră...*, [Here you are] p. 201 (Declarația generalului Constantin Lucescu).

<sup>99</sup> *Sfârșitul dictaturii*, [The end of dictatorship], p. 135.

<sup>100</sup>Tana Ardeleanu, Răzvan Savaliuc, col. Ion Baiu, *Procesul Ceaușeștilor*, București, Editura Ziua, 1996, p. 30-31 [The trial of the Ceaușescus].

\* After the trial and Nicolae Ceaușescu's and Elena Ceaușescu's execution, when the judges came back to Bucharest they modified the communiqué, by adding a fifth accusation point: 'the attempt to escape the country on the basis of funds of over 1 billion dollars deposited in foreign banks'.

<sup>101</sup>Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *Revoluția Română- o revoluție neterminată?* [The Romanian Revolution - an unfinished revolution ?] în *Întrebări cu și fără răspuns. Decembrie 1989*, Volum îngrijit de Iosif Costinaș, Memorialul Revoluției, Timișoara, Editura Mirton, 2001, p. 40-41.

<sup>102</sup>Ioan Scurtu, *Istoria contemporană a României (1918-2007)*, [Romania's contemporary history (1918 - 2007) București, Editura Fundației România de Măine, 2007, p. 220.

<sup>103</sup>Petre Roman, *Mărturii provocate. Convorbiri cu Elena Ștefoi*, [Provoked statements. Talks with Elena Ștefoi] București, Editura Paideia, 2002, p. 10.

<sup>104</sup>*Armata română în revoluția din decembrie 1989*, [The Romanian army in the December revolution] p. 462.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 475.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 462 - 472 (se indică numele și unitatea militară).

<sup>107</sup> *Șase zile...*, [Six days] p. 100.

<sup>108</sup> Marius Mioc, *Revoluția din Timișoara...*, [The revolution in Timișoara] p. 247.

<sup>109</sup> *Șase zile...*, [Six days], pp. 111-112.

<sup>110</sup>See dr. Alesandru Duțu, *Revoluția din Decembrie 1989. Cronologie*, [The Revolution of December 1989. Chronology] București, Editura Institutului Revoluției Române din Decembrie 1989, 2006; Stelian Tănase, *Miracolul revoluției. O istorie politică a căderii regimurilor comuniste*, [The miracle of the revolution. A political history of the communist regime fall] București, Editura Humanitas, 1999; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Nașterea și moartea comunismului în sec. XX. Marele eșec*, [Birth and death of communism in 20th century. The big failure] Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1993; J. Levesque, *1989. La fin d'un Empire. L'URSS et la libération de l'Europe de d'Est*, Paris, 1995.

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