

ACTIONS OF REPRESSION DIRECTED TOWARDS THE DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT: DECEMBER 1989 IN TIMISOARA

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Abstract: This study aims at accurately presenting the structure of the headquarter repression of the manifestations for democracy in December 1989, while detailing the actions that took place at that time. The repressive actions occurred under the coordination of a team. They were conducted directly from Bucharest, first through the mediation of the party and local administration institutions, along with units from the areas of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and of the Ministry of National Defense. Later, officials in control of the Communist Party, the Army, Militia (former Police during the communist regime), Prosecution, and Securitatea (the secret or intelligence service within the communist system) were sent to Timisoara, as well. On December 17, around 4.30 pm, there was a shoot up, whereby many persons were killed and others were wounded. The repression troupes occupied the city and made sure that the traces of the revolt have been erased. The medical evidence was largely destroyed. Likewise, the authorities refused to engage in dialogue with the revolutionaries, as their only attempt in that respect occurred on December 20, 1989. In such conditions, the communist regime from Romania continued the repressions until December 22, at 12 am, when demonstrators relegated Nicolae Ceaușescu from his position of power.

Keywords: repression, Ceaușescu, Romanian Revolution, Timisoara, authoritarian regimes

Introduction

The year 1989 was the year of democratic changes in Central and Eastern Europe. Romania entered that direction of protests and democratic reforms rather late, as the changes were difficult and painful (Tismăneanu, 2014). Ceaușescu's country makes a discordant note in the series of peaceful revolutions, because the repression forces of the communist regime decided to open the fire, which led to 162 dead and 1107 wounded, until Nicolae Ceaușescu left his position of power on December 22, 1989. In Timisoara, a city located near the Western border of Romania, where the revolutionary movement started on December 16, 1989, 73 deceased and 324 wounded were registered before the dictator's escape (Szabo, 2014: 32). 43 corpses were picked from the Morgue, taken to Bucharest, and incinerated (Rotar, 2010). The massacre was possible as a result of the actions that the repression teams had organized (Hall, 2000). On the evening of December

16, those were performed by the local forces of *Militia*, *Securitate*, Firefighters, and Rangers, with the implication of the communist leaders from administration.

Beginning December 17 in the morning, several officials serving important functions arrived, one at a time, from Bucharest to Timisoara. On Sunday, but in the afternoon, the brigade led by the secretary for special problems of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Ion Coman arrived, as well. Important high officials from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of General Prosecution, and high leveled activists of the party accompanied Ion Coman upon his arrival. Some of them were stuck with him permanently, but others coordinated the repressive actions from subordinate units divided in sections. Wednesday, December 20 brought the arrival of Constantin Dăscălescu, the prime minister of the Social Republic of Romania at that date. Yet, he stepped aside (on the back door!) and was at no time available for a real dialogue with the protesters.

As regards the above commandment, there was no formal written decision to have it constituted. Yet, most certainly, such an order existed and functioned, in virtue of the centralist system and the pyramidal stratification of command specific to the dictatorial communist regime. Of course, there were situations when the lack of coordination between the party leaders (the Romanian Communist Party), those from the Army (the Ministry of National Defense, including Patriotic Guards and Civil Defense), and those from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (with several structures: *Militia*, *Securitate*, Firefighters, Rangers, and Safety and *Securitate* Troupes) gave the impression that the action was not being conducted in centralized coordination. Yet, despite that dysfunctionality, the commandment was as real as it gets. Its role and actions clearly emerged and stood out in the verdict given in the Timisoara Trial: "Through the concerted action of the forces under the command of the former secretary of CC of RCP, Ion Coman, the dissolution of the demonstrators was pursued in the first place, and not the annihilation of those who, by taking advantage of the events' evolution, committed acts of destruction or circumvention" (Orban and Rado 2010: 231). In Bucharest, Nicolae Ceaușescu and, in his absence, Elena Ceaușescu led the commandment, by giving direct orders to the ministers and the secretaries of the Central Committee.

The officials who organized and led the repressions

The Bucharest team who coordinated the activities of the repression forces from Timisoara consisted of: Nicolae Ceaușescu, the general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party; Elena Ceaușescu, the prime vice-prime minister of the Romanian Government; Emil Bobu, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party; Manea Manescu, the vice-prime minister of the Government; Tudor Postelnicu, the minister of Internal Affairs; Vasile Milea, the minister of National Defense; Nicolae Popovici, the general prosecuting attorney of the Social Republic of Romania; Maria Bobu, the minister of Justice; Iulian Vlad, the director of State Department of *Securitate*. There were several party activists involved, as the leaders of

the Romanian Communist Party used to have lots of authority, while responsibility on the party line was foremost important to them (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2006). The team commanded repression measures, directed towards the persons that manifested in favor of freedom and democracy, either by using the subordinates that led the institutions and military units in the area, or via the representatives from the center that were sent over from Bucharest or other locations in order to perform actions against the protesters. Their actions were intensely supported by the huge repressive system of the communist state.

Among the persons who came from the center to suppress the movement in favor of civil liberties in Timisoara, we are pointing out: Ion Coman, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, who coordinated all the activities of the repression forces; Gheorghe Diaconescu, the adjunct of the general prosecuting attorney; Nicolae Bracaciu, the adjunct of the minister of Justice; Ilie Matei, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (former prime-secretary of the Party Committee of Timiș County); Cornel Pacoste, the prime vice-premier of the Government of the Social Republic of Romania; Nicolae Mihalache, the adjunct of the chief of the organization section of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party; Constantin Nuță, the adjunct of the minister of Internal Affairs and the chief of the General Inspectorate of Militia; Ștefan Gușă, the chief of the Great Major State and the prime-adjunct of the minister of National Defense; Victor Atanasie Stănculescu, the adjunct of the minister of National Defense; Mihai Chițac, the commander of the Chemical Troupes from the Ministry of National Defense and commander of the Bucharest Post; Velicu Mihalea, the adjunct of the chief of the General Inspectorate of Militia; Emil Macri, the chief of Direction of Economic Contrainformation of Securitate of the State; Nicolae Ghircoiaș, the director of the Institute of Criminalistic Techniques of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Dumitru Rosiu, the chief of Judicial Service of the General Inspectorate of Militia; Tudor Stanica, the chief of the Direction of Penal Investigations within the General Inspectorate of Militia; Mihai Onțanu, the adjunct of the chief of the Direction of Penal Investigations within the General Inspectorate of Militia; Gheorghe Carasca, the adjunct of the chief of the Direction of Penal Investigations within Securitate of the State; Dumitru Ștefan, the alternate of the chief of the Direction Circulation within the General Inspectorate of Militia; Filip Teodorescu, the alternate of the chief of the Direction Counter-espionage within Securitate of the State; Gabriel Anastasiu, the alternate of the chief of the Direction of Internal Information within Securitate of the State; Dan Nicolici, the chief of the Center of information-documentation within the General Inspectorate of Militia; Gheorghe Glavan, the informative chief of RSAS (the Romanian Service of Anti-terrorist Struggle); Gheorghe Manta, instructor within the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party; Florea Carneanu, the alternate of the commander of the Commandment of Antiaerial Defense of the Territory; Dumitru Ionescu, officer within the Great Major State of the Army; Teodor Ardelean, officer within the Great Major State of the Army; Gheorghe Radu, the alternate of the chief of the Direction Operations within the Great Major State.

The local repressive commandment

At the county level, the prime-secretary, a position Radu Bălan filled at the time, led the repression commandment (called of "Defense" in the official documents). Vasile Bolog, the propaganda secretary, Florea Sofronie, Viorica Boiborean, Teodora Avram, and other members of the County Committee of the Party supported it, as well. Petru Moț, the mayor (officially, the prime-secretary of the Municipal Committee of the Party from Timisoara) and Ioan Rotărescu, the secretary for organizational problems functioned at the municipality level. As the prosecutors recorded within the indictment that was put together for the arraignment of the defendants in the Timisoara Trial, there were merely repressive intentions and no attempt at clearing up those who came out on the streets. Here is what they say about Radu Bălan and Ilie Matei: "The demonstrators were brutally attacked on the evening of December 16, 1989 by intervention brigades of *Militia* and subunits of *Securitate* and Firefighters Troupes, which used maces, tear gases, and water tanks against them. Through those acts of violence, the two defendants, who refused to discuss openly with the masses of demonstrators, manifested their overt intention to suppress any anti-dictatorial movement" (Orban and Rado 2010: 206).

Romeo Bălan showed that some communist leaders of the country from that period were aware that it was all about persons who retrieved rights and liberties. Among them, there was the minister Vasile Milea. For the purpose of opening the fire against the demonstrators, he specified: "The demonstrators will be seriously warned, and then shot at the feet level." And because demonstrators were at stake, the Army had no reason to shot them: the opening of the fire was a murder, because "the order referred to demonstrators and not hooligans and apaches" (Bălan, 2011: 15-16). We must mention that, even against hooligans, legal measures do not refer to execution in the street.

If the persons from the repression commandment coordinated many actions against the peaceful demonstrators, some of them standing out through their direct execution, there were officers who came from various areas of the country who, along with those from the local structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of National Defense, executed a large variety of actions to limit the protest and identify its leaders in order to silent them. They handled collecting information by trailing and infiltration among the crowds, by interrogating the persons who were detained within the Penitentiary and the Arrest of the Internal Affairs Inspectorate from Timisoara, as well as the wounded persons in the hospitals (Szabo, 2013b: 100). Gabriel Anastasiu, the alternate of the chief of the Direction of Internal Information within Securitate of the State specified that he came to Timisoara accompanied by subordinate officers, naming lieutenant-colonel Ioan Pop and captain Adrian Barbulescu, while colonel Victor Achim was brought from Drobeta Turnu Severin. Lieutenant-colonel Gavril Oniceag and Costică Tănase were already in Timisoara, and were ordered to stay put (Rado, 2013: 111). Colonel Nicolae Glăveanu from RSAS Bucharest was also in Timisoara at the time (Radu, 1990).

The people from Securitate

The Timiș Securitate involved via the activity of its chief, colonel Traian Sima, and his adjuncts, lieutenant-colonel Gheorghe Atudoroaie and major Tinu Radu. Lieutenant-colonel Petru Pele and colonel Constantin Cîntărețu commanded the officers from local Securitate, through Services I and II, and worked in teams to collect information. The chief interrogator, lieutenant-colonel Gheorghe Salajan (sometimes written as Gheorghe Sălăgeanu) also came to the front. Colonel Aurel Rogojan, lieutenant-colonel Felician Ceghi, Adrian Cârstea, Gheorghe Diaconescu, Dumitru Popescu (chief of the Romanian Service of Anti-terrorist Struggle – USLA), Constantin Tănasie, Andrei Uram, Ștefan Demeter, major Ion Adamescu, Adrian Bradisteanu, Nicolae Zarcu, Nicolae Mavru, Ion Ungureanu, Petru Veltanescu, captain Aurel Cighi, Vasile Grui, Mihai Pereschin, Vasile Petrea, Ion Țepeneu, Ionel Ionescu, Mihai Florian Vidican, Eugen Zaharia, Saul Beloia, Marin Vasile, Mihai Petenchi, lieutenant-major Liviu Dinulescu, Marian Ștef, Liviu Baniac, Mircea Novac, Vasile Marian, Aurelian Cioabă, lieutenant Ioan Clava, Valerica Fulga, all acted under their command. Some of those mentioned above were officers responsible for the various economic objectives and were there for the time of the revolutionary events. They tried to intimidate the workers, so that they did not discuss what happened, did not take attitude, and did not organize to come out in the streets for massive protests. The impeded events became, eventually, at the price of numerous victims, the reason for the fall of the communist regime.

Gheorghe Atudoroaie, one of the alternates of the chief of Securitate, Timiș, admitted, indirectly, the following aspects: "Around 7.30 pm, on December 16, 1989, I sent by order the officers from Securitate II to the economic objectives, without any munitions, with the mission to stay there over night, as well, in order to control de state of mind of the working personnel, to firmly assure and secure the economic units, and to prevent events with grave consequences" (Rado, 2013: 164). We can see in Atudoroaie's declaration that his first objective referred to the people's states of mind, as attacking the units was out of the question, while reference to preventing the serious events was simple rhetoric, to distract attention from the main idea. The officers in economic units supplied periodic reports, while captain Aurel Cighi took them up and processed them along with the chief of services II, major Zarcu.

The people from Militia

The chiefs from the center had as their subordinates Militia employees brought from Bucharest and executing officers without any position, besides those already mentioned. Among those, there were: colonel Florescu and lieutenant-colonel Obăgila from the Direction Safeguard and Order within the General Inspectorate of Militia, colonel Ardeleanu from the Judicial, colonel Lupu, lieutenant-colonel Beldeanu, major Mihaiasa, Mihai Florea, captain Neagu, all from the Direction of Penal Investigations within the

General Inspectorate of Militia. Among the Timiș Militia officers who acted upon the population during those days colonel Ion Popescu, inspector-in-chief, colonel Ion Deheleanu, the head of the institution, lieutenant-colonel Ion Corpodeanu and major Ioan Popa, the alternates of Deheleanu, colonel Constantin Ion, lieutenant-colonel Constantin Tufariu, lieutenant-colonel Gheorghe Farcasu, colonel Fuiery, lieutenant-colonel Ioan Dumitrescu, lieutenant-colonel Ioan Haprean, major Gelu Popovici, Iosif Veverca, Sabin Bădescu, Gheorghe Dragoș, Traian Bolosin, Pavel Rădulescu and Adam Mureșan, captain Pavel Țoia, Vasile Căndea, Mihai Matei, Ciocan, Flore Tocut, lieutenant-major Dorin Iepure, Traian Olaru, Mircea Drăgan, Dorel-Aurel Mureșan, Codreanu, lieutenant Dorel Andras and Florin Dragomir, all came to the front. Lieutenants Ioan Bara and Mitariu were very active, especially in detaining the demonstrators, on the night of December 16, 1989.

Colonel Ioan Bunoaica and the chief of the major state, lieutenant-colonel Tomus commanded the Troupes from the Safety and Securitate Brigades in Timisoara and worked to their continuous coordination. Lieutenant-colonel Ion Sasu, with his subordinate officers, among which Horia Septimiu Bodocan, conducted the formations from Firefighters, in strong connection with the intervention teams of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and of the Army. Firefighter troupes in the area came to their support. An officer called Dumitru Țăran led a team that came from Arad. Commander colonel Petre Teacă coordinated, from the Capital, the repression devices that the Rangers Teams took part of, in their turn. They switched, for a few days, from subordination to the Ministry of National Defense to subordination to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The passing-receiving operation in Timisoara was over on December 18, 1989. Lieutenant-colonel Neculai Nechita, the chief of the Major State at that time, then the commander of the unit, as well as lieutenant-major Ion Clavac from Rangers came to the front. Colonel Pantelimon Ciocoiu from Bucharest stood out, as well.

The Army people

The Army had an overwhelming role in the repression, as the local forces gave their very best in that respect. We are talking about colonel Gheorghe Rotariu, the commander of the Post and of the Antiaerial Defense Division, lieutenant-colonel Constantin Zeca, empowered to command the Mechanized Division 18 Timisoara, and Nicolae Predonescu, the chief of the Major State of the same unit, the officer who commanded the shooting up for the first time in Timisoara, on December 17, 1989, around 4.15-4.30 pm, in the Liberty Plaza. The fire came from the balcony of the Mechanized Division 18 Timisoara (Szabo, 2013a). Likewise, lieutenant-colonel Constantin Caraivan, who commanded the Artillery within Division 18 and lieutenant-colonel Ștefan Balaș and major Gheorghe Vlăduț played an important role. Important names in the repression were lieutenant-colonel Mihai Bulai, the former commander of the tanks regiment from Giroc, colonel Constantin Rogin or lieutenant-colonel Gheorghe Visinescu from the same unit. Major Vasile Paul, Dorinel Biriș, captain Neagu, Octavian Pruneanu, lieutenant-major

Dorel Romanescu came to the front on the Giroc Lane. Major Gheorghe Borodan, Ioan Burci, Ion Dincă, Aurel Dima, Moise Iercosan, Octav Plesca, Ioan Ungur, captain Nicolae Benghia, Marin Chiriac, Constantin Miu, Marin Ene, Dumitru Caseriu, Nicolae Ilie, Iordache Mare, Adrian Neagu, Gheorghe Oprisoreanu, Marin Patrulescu, Florin Predescu, Tiberiu Savin, lieutenant-major Daniel Botez, Constantin Gheorghe, Vasile Cindea, Maricel Cristea, Constantin Maiescu, lieutenant Traian Ardeleanu, Daniel Dinu, and Daniel Craiu participated to the repressive actions, in their turn. Lieutenant-major Maricel Cristea, who came with Vasile Paul's unit from Lugoj, witnessed the repression measures on Girocului Lane and was the only one among those present who was honest and humane enough to relate what happened, by indicating those guilty for the massacre.

Major Velicicu, the chief of Counter-information Services of the Mechanized Division 18 was also involved. Other involved officers were lieutenant-colonel Vasile Ceuca, major Constantin Judele, lieutenant-major Adrian Vladila, but also Marius Bora and Dorel Rus. There were soldiers such as Petrea Ioan Cristea, the chief of the Major State, Ion Partenie, Dănuț Eftimie, Gheorghe Vasile, and Ion Bădărău, officers from the Patriotic Guards Timiș.

Among the officers from the Ministry of National Defense who came to Timisoara for the repressions, lieutenant-colonel Ilie Gurschi, the commander of a detachment of paratroopers who came from the Army Unit Deveselu, Dolj County stood out, due to his actions. On December 21, 1989, the detachment involved in the blocking of the activities in the Polygraphic Enterprise Banat, when they tried to thwart the appearance of the manifesto of the Democratic Romanian Front. At the same time, Gurschi took part of the group that was constituted, on December 22, 1989, in the morning, to capture the leaders of the Revolution from the Balcony of the Opera House in Timisoara and destroy the amplification equipments. Tinu Radu, a participant from Securitate Timiș to those preparations testifies in that respect (Szabo, 2013a). At the same time, Gurschi (with his subordinate soldiers) assured the evacuation of the prime minister Constantin Dăscălescu and the other party and state leaders from the building of the former County Party Committee. Some of the victims among the Timisoara people recorded on the night of 22 to 23 of December, 1989 can be attributed to them, because they were the ones who acted in the Opera Plaza - the Banat Museum - Central Hotel area, where several persons were killed or wounded. Lieutenant-colonel Daniel Dinu from the Ministry of National Defense was wounded in the left foot in the same area. On the evening of December 22, 1989, around 11 pm, he was patrolling in front of the Opera House. Caporal Ioan Kantor reported to him that an armed paratrooper refused to identify himself and disappeared. A few minutes later, the soldiers left in the direction of the Banat Museum to look for the paratrooper and the civilians that accompanied him. Then the fire was opened from that area and lieutenant-colonel Dinu was wounded by a bullet that rebounded (Milin, 2007a: 2495).

Other involved institutions

Chiefs of institutions or their employees participated to the local repression teams, in their turn. We should mention Rodica Novac, the director of the Sanitary Direction Timiș, Ovidiu Golea, the director of the County Hospital and adjunct director at the Sanitary Direction Timis, Elena Topală, the president of the Timiș Court House, and Mihai Teperdel, the territorial inspector of the Cults Department. Local prosecutors (coordinated by Laurean Tulinca), as well as those brought over from around the country (Bucharest, Arad, Caras-Severin, and Hunedoara) acted at the order of the adjunct of the general prosecution attorney, Gheorghe Diaconescu (military magistrate), whom Nicolae Popovici, the general prosecution attorney sent in mission to Timisoara. Mihai Ionescu, Ion Onofrei, Ioan Mihai Alexandru, and Gheorghe Mocuta came from Bucharest along with Diaconescu. The role of the prosecution attorneys who came from outside was to interrogate the demonstrators retained in the Timisoara Penitentiary, situated on Popa Șapcă Street. On the morning of December 17, when he landed in Timisoara with a Tarom flight, Diaconescu went to the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Timis to organize the repression together with generals Constantin Nuță, Velicu Mihalea, and Emil Macrea (Milin, 2007b: 3429). The prosecution did not emit any bench warrant during the Revolution period. There were hundreds of arrested people in Timisoara (around 800), while the issue of arrest came up in the case of another 28-30 files. They were those persons upon whom goods stolen from the devastated stores had been found (Milin, 2007b: 3533). The prosecution did not involve in the release of those who were detained illegally, on which no evidence has been found and who, anyhow, were there beyond the legal term of 24 hours.

But what is truly staggering is that the prosecution attorneys did not make the smallest attempt to identify the persons who shot the population! Of course, the corpses have been examined, which required an extra presence from Bucharest in the persons of prosecution attorneys Ovidiu Petrescu and Vasile Grevdea. Another team, with many components from Romania's Government, came to Timisoara around 1 pm on December 20, 1989. Constantin Dăscălescu, the prime minister of the Social Republic of Romania commanded it. Emil Bobu, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, a person very close to the Ceaușescu family, accompanied him. Nicolae Vaidescu, the minister of the Electrotechnical Industry, Eugeniu Rădulescu, the minister of Automobile Constructions, Maria Flusca, the minister of the Light Industry, and Ioan Toma, the general secretary of the Communist Youth Union, in fact, the minister of Youth were part of the delegation, as well. The ministers who were present in Timisoara had the task of going to the large companies in their area of expertise to prevent the emergence of the employees in the streets and determine them to get on with their work. They did not even try to intervene, because the workers were already in front of the County Party Committee and in the Opera Plaza (Victoriei). They limited to some discussions with the directors of the companies, most of them empty at the time. In fact, the ministers who came from Bucharest were surprised by what they found out in

Timisoara, as in Bucharest the true dimension of the revolutionary events has been unknown.

The repressive strategies

The teams who acted against the fighters for democracy, liberty, and a better life in Timisoara applied an entire range of repressive techniques:

1) *Intimidation*. First, intimidation techniques manifested through the presence of several employees from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, either wearing a uniform or dressed like civilians, on the streets. Starting the night of December 16 to 17, 1989, patrols of the Ministry of National Defense took place in town. Their presence there had the purpose of discouraging people from getting together to constitute groups that would act in an organized manner. Even since December 16, the demonstrators were intimidated by use of Firefighters automobiles, Ministry of Internal Affairs automobiles, by use of the cars of those in high positions of power (which had small numbers), as well as Army's vehicles, all of them having an apparent and distinct presence in various places of gathering of the demonstrators. On Sunday at lunch, the tanks and the armor-plated amphibian transporters (AAT) came into action and occupied the city.

2) *Misinformation*. The most important act of misinformation took place on December 16-17, when Nicolae Ceaușescu, the former general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and the president of the Social Republic of Romania was informed only that there were commercial units that were broken, not about the fact that the heavy part of the protests concerned democratic reforms. That act of cowardice on the part of the local communist activists, of Militia officers, and people from Securitate from the local area favored the drastic, excessive measures dictated by Nicolae Ceaușescu against the Timisoara people. Previously, Ceaușescu has been informed that there were just a handful of fanatical church-goers in the Reformed Church. Later, on December 18 and 19, the Ceaușescu spouses were intoxicated with another lie, according to which the demonstrators had attacked military units. In his discourse that was radio and TV mediated, on the evening of December 20, Nicolae Ceaușescu invoked the reasons above to justify the introduction of other drastic measures in Timisoara and around the country, while not knowing that they were false. He was also misinformed as regards the involvement of some foreign agents and powers in the revolt from Timisoara. Yet another piece of misinformation that has been locally used was that the shot persons, defalcated from the Morgue and taken to Bucharest in order to be incinerated, fled across the border.

3) *Threats and blockages*. Since December 16, the Timisoara people have been permanently threatened. There was a large variety of verbal phrases, combined with insults. They were used to try and push people away from the sensitive issues. The families of those deceased were included in the threatening process, as they were looking for their own. Many times, speech was accompanied by gestures, when the members of the forces of order raised bludgeons or weapons and simulated shooting. There were also threats by use of auto-vehicles, whereby they simulated marching into the crowds with

tanks and AATs. The city was submitted to blockage, while on the main access ways there were filters installed, to prevent the entrance of the outsiders and the people from leaving the town. The telephonic conversations were stopped, while the state of necessity was installed (Ban, 2012).

4) *Violence*. The members of the repression teams exerted, beyond verbal violence, physical violence that is hard to imagine. People (men, women, children, young, or old) were beaten with the palms, the fists, with wooden sticks, stones, wrecking bars, cables, rubber maces, and the back of the weapons. Likewise, they were shot by use of submachine guns, flame spray guns, semi-automatic rifles (with lunettes), or machine guns from the AATs or tanks. Throughout the entire interval, the demonstrators did not have any fire guns upon them. From time to time, they also turned to bludgeons, stones, bottles, or jars (full or empty). They had a way more powerful weapon, though: the will to overthrow the regime (Szabo, 2014: 16).

The modes to annihilate the demonstrators

The repression between December 16 and 22, 1989, in Timisoara, developed along two coordinates: 1) Direct actions against the demonstrators, resulting in arrest, bats with various objects, as well as gun fire; 2) Informative actions that were meant to identify the leaders of the demonstrators' groups, in an attempt to annihilate them (by detainment or shooting). Within this frame, the suffering of the wounded or arrested did not matter to the soldiers, Militia officers, people from Securitate, firefighters, rangers, and party activists. The drama that Adrian Costin went through perfectly illustrates the idea. On the evening of December 17, he left home to pick up his wife from a different ward of the city. He joined some groups of demonstrators and, in the 700 Plaza, he was shot in the shoulder, as the fire started from the Opera Plaza - Timisoara Hotel area. That was an area where several victims have been recorded. Although he was wounded, A. Costin did not go to the hospital; instead, he went home, accompanied by his friends, yet without having found his wife. Near the Northern Train Station, they were arrested, taken to the Transportation Militia, beaten, and required to write declarations as regards their presence on the street. From there, along with other arrested people, they arrived to the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Timiș, where they were all brutally beaten by officers dressed in uniforms or like civilians. Upon dawn, they reached the Penitentiary. There, they have not been beaten anymore; instead they were interrogated as regards their reasons for getting on the streets and as regards the shouted slogans.

Unlike other injured people, Adrian Costin informed the officials that he had medical problems in the shoulder. He was promised medical care, but no one attended. On December 20, upon pressure from the demonstrators from the Opera House and the County Party, he was released, along with other persons. The wound did not look well, so he went to the New Clinics to get medical care. He refused to hospitalize himself. After the Winter Holidays, he went to a polyclinic, where he received treatment. On February 2, 1990, he was subjected to surgery on his arm, and the bullet was taken out, eventually

(Milin, 2007b: 3142-3143). This is a complex case, but most of the victims recorded in the Timisoara Revolution from December 1989 went through one or more of the sequences mentioned: arrest, beating, shooting, and interrogation. All those tragic events came as a result of the order that Nicolae Ceaușescu passed: "taking measures", including shooting up, "measures" put into practice by the repression teams, became the first priority.

Guilt, lies, and retracted declarations

Ion Coman, the chief of the commandment of repression of the demonstrators for democracy and citizen liberties in Timisoara, explicitly admitted either that he gave orders for the opening of the fire, or that he passed Nicolae Ceaușescu's order to shoot up the demonstrators: "I had the representation that by giving the order that the fire should be opened, there will be a massacre, which, fortunately, did not occur" (Rado, 2013: 8). During the impeachment, Coman retracted many of the declarations he previously gave the prosecution attorneys. In some cases, he was right, as the case is in the matter of the shoot up, as the order was passed around 2.30 pm. Vasile Milea gave the order from the Ministry of National Defense, while Tudor Postelnicu passed the order from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Both of them were resort ministers, the only ones in the position to pass those orders. Later, in the declaration given during the arraignment, Ion Coman declared that he was reported "only" 58 deaths, which, in his view, was proof that the number of the shot people was limited.

The easiest excuse, often invoked in the court, was that the shooting up order referred to the hooliganism elements, as they devastated institutions and attacked the forces of order or military units, an aspect that does not correspond to reality. Then, another excuse was that the shooting up was made in conformity with the legal requests, that is, summons, fire on vertical plan, followed by fire at the feet. Yet, most of the persons hit by bullets had penetration orifices in the abdomen, chest, and the head areas. Ion Coman reconfirmed the order for the opening of the fire given by telephone by Nicolae Ceaușescu to the chief of the forces of repression within the Army, general Ștefan Gușă, as well as to the chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, general Constantin Nuță, around 6.30-7 pm, on December 17, about an hour after he took command in Timisoara. Yet, as proven, the first shot victims appeared shortly after 4 pm, in the Liberty Plaza in Timisoara, where soldiers from the Mechanized Division 18 fired their guns. Ion Coman piqued himself on his not allowing, as he declared, the use of heavy weapons, such as tanks and cannons, although it is clear that machine guns from the AATS have actually been used. The former chief of the repression commandment in Timisoara specified, upon arraignment: "Even from the moment I arrived, I forbade the use of heavy munitions against the demonstrators. I ordered gun shooting by use infantry weapons (automatic rifles) only. I gave the order that tanks, cannons, AATs, helicopters, and planes will not be used" (Rado, 2013: 17-18). Yet tanks, AATs, and helicopters have been used. The

tanks played an intimidation role, while the helicopters served to observe the moves of the demonstrators.

The fear Ceaușescu provoked and his misinformation

A few things stand out as regards the actions of the huge mechanism of repression from Timisoara. First, Ceaușescu was reported that the initiated movement meant destruction operated by hooligan elements. No person in a position of power dared mentioning to him either the slogans in favor of democracy and fundamental liberties, or the fact that the requests were elementary: bread, heat, electricity, and medication. Another aspect is that the shooting often occurred after the economic units have been devastated. When the fire was opened, the targets have not been those engaged in destruction, but the groups of demonstrators. Thus, fire was opened -- and there were many victims -- upon the persons gathered on the steps of the Cathedral, both on the evening of December 17 and on the night of December 18. The Cathedral was not at risk of being devastated. Instead, nothing was done to stop the devastation of the stores across the street, a few meters from those who opened the fire.

Cristian Liviu Campean was 13 years old when he was wounded in the Liberty Plaza. His clear glance and fresh mind helped him to recall the following aspect, which he later related in court: "After everything was broken, then they opened the fire. After!" (Milin, 2007a: 2842). That was an aspect the court retained when they gave their verdict in the Timisoara Trial, an occasion to emphasize that the forces of order had the role of protecting people and goods, not the role of killing: "The forces that were supposed to assure the protection of the stores involved in the shooting up against the demonstrators, and the result consisted of many dead and wounded" (Orban and Rado, 2010: 267). As a matter of fact, the court recorded that there was no legal ground for the shooting, as the devastation of the institutions and commercial units did not in any way justify the use of guns, especially since innocent people were exposed to danger, some of them being killed, and others only wounded (Orban and Rado, 2010: 313).

The conclusion that we may infer is that in Timisoara, during December 16 and 22, 1989, a commandment of repression existed. Even though it was not formally constituted, it acted directly against the persons who retrieved civil and political rights. Out of fear and cowardice, the leaders of that commandment did not inform Nicolae Ceaușescu correctly about the protests. Instead, they sustained his wrong decisions and actually commanded the repressive actions directed towards the insurrectionists. More, they supported the decisions regarding the erasing of traces of the revolutionary actions, including that of incinerating corpses.

After the dismissal of Nicolae Ceaușescu from his position of power, it would have been natural for Romania to head the direction of democratic values and construct a society in which fundamental rights and liberties would be respected. In fact, the right to justice was almost totally ignored. There was no adjudgement for the practices and actions that the representatives of the communist regime executed. It was not before

December 18, 2007, in the Romanian Parliament, that the conclusions of the *Final Report* of the Presidential Committee for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania have been presented, a report greeted with remarkable hostility (Cesereanu, 2008). A few days before, on December 5, 2007, generals Victor Atanasie Stănculescu and Mihai Chițac, two of those responsible for the Timisoara massacre, were finally convicted. Their trial took a very long time because they both held very important positions within the first post-revolutionary government, the former as the minister of Economy, and then of National Defense, and the latter as the minister of Internal Affairs. In the Timisoara Trial, which started on March 2, 1990, whereby officers from Militia and Securitate, as well as four leaders of the communist administration have been judged, few persons have been convicted. In such conditions, the lack of sound judicial investigation that would shed light on the crimes from Timisoara and their authors affects Romania's efforts at building a society centered on respect of the state of the right and responsibility for committed actions. Within this context, research should be continued to identify all the persons involved in the repression, their actions, for the moral purpose of their bringing to account.

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