

The Foreign Secret Agents and the Revolution

During the last twenty years since the events of December 1989 in Romania, there have been countless allegations, particularly in mass-media, that foreign secret agents had been involved in the Revolution and, even more, that the Revolution itself had been set off by such foreign agents. Numerous scenarios, drawing in Soviet, Serbian, American or Hungarian covert agents were shaped. Even Nicolae Ceausescu was more than certain that foreign agents had been involved in covert operations in Timișoara. He may have changed his opinion on December 25th 1989 when he saw the members of that peculiar “revolutionary” panel of judges. It was too late, though because he was sentenced to death and executed immediately after the sentence was ruled. Even now, after more than 20 years, there are still some voices that support this allegation.

It is good to know that until the end of Cold War, covert agents operated in almost all European embassies and definitely, Romania was not left out. As a rule, the identities of the covert agents were known by the officials in the State Security Department and consequently, they were under careful supervision. At that time, Romania was known as a country with a very strong and active counter-intelligence department.

There is no doubt that due to great political and social changes occurred in the central and east-European countries in 1989, these counter-intelligence activities were intensified on the territories of the member states to the Pact of Warsaw. However, starting from these covert counter-intelligence operations which were somehow carried out in the “natural meaning” of those times, it is tough too much to state that those agents took the people out on the streets or that they were hidden in different buildings, from where they opened fire on the people. It is hard to believe the Securitate people had no knowledge on such activities or that they even tolerated thereof.

Let's see what the high officials of the State Security Department declared during the *Trial of Timișoara*, in relation to the allegedly foreign secret agents from Romania.

Maj. Gen. Macri Emil, former chief of the Economic Counter-Intelligence Department of D.S.S (*State Security Department*):

„ When I spoke about the actions carried out by the Army I forgot to mention an event which I consider important: The Army didn't need any kind of information from us. As a matter of fact, neither did they ask for it nor did we give such information, because they brought along all

necessary forces and equipments there (including the necessary means to have access to intelligence). To be more specifically, the army deployed a tactical unit within the Army Intelligence Division, in Timisoara. You may wonder how I know these things. Well, on Monday, the workers from one of the objectives we monitored, ELBA, as I recall, caught three persons they considered suspects and surrendered them to Lieut. or Capt. Ștef, a Securitate officer in charge of monitoring the factory. He then took them to the Militia Inspectorate and after completing the identification procedures he found out that all three were agents with the Army Intelligence Department (D.I.A.): an officer, a non-commissioned officer and a soldier. They had identification badges and service orders and furthermore, they were armed. I contacted Coman and I somehow admonished him that he allowed such provocations. He acknowledged that a powerful Army Intelligence Department squad was deployed in the city. He told me something about 50 agents, but I don't really know if there were 50 or 100 agents. He also asked me to somehow disregard their potential lack of experience".¹

„Nevertheless, in relation to the major issue for which we all gathered here, the identification of the instigating foreign agents, Atanasiu has never reported such data and even if we had no knowledge on this information data or similar data, I ought to have known such intelligence and such characters.”²

Col. Teodorescu Filip, former deputy of the Chief of Counter-Intelligence Department within the D.S.S. (State Security Department).

P.C.: - That's all. „Consequently, I contacted the Chief of Counter-Intelligence Service, Dragoman Romul, who, until the end of that day, after verifying, upon my express request, the accuracy of the information on the presence in the country of certain covert operatives, notified me that such information was not confirmed. He assured me that he had no knowledge to that effect.”

T.F.: - Exactly!

P.C.: - And I understood that during that entire period, you haven't...

T.F.: - We did not manage to obtain any kind of intelligence to that effect...

P.C.: - „I reiterate that during the entire period of the events from Timișoara, in spite of all our efforts, we could not get any information that foreign counter-intelligence agents would have

¹ *Procesul de la Timișoara (Trial of Timisoara)*, vol. I, page. 30

² *Procesul de la Timișoara (Trial of Timisoara)*, vol. I, page. 76

conducted covert operations designed to undermine the already weakened situation from County Timis.”³

„...Therefore I want to emphasize that, on the morning of December 18th, Macri called me, Sima, Radu Tinu, Atudoroaie, Anastasiu and Carașcă and informed us about Vlad’s order to contact the informative network to identify the root causes of the incidents that had occurred as well as the initiators thereof. Each of us, following our line of work, obeyed the order. Major Carașcă, at Macri’s express order, contacted Tudor Stănică, to investigate those that had been arrested, I also underline that the data we transmitted to Bucharest clearly pointed out that the actions were and are spontaneous and are not the outcome of any previous arrangements or are not due to the involvement of some foreign agents.”⁴

T.F.: - I have nothing to call down on me concerning my activity during those days and the events occurred in Timișoara.

P.C.: - *Focusing solely on the facts, do you think that by the entire activity you carried out here you had a certain contribution to restoring order?*

T.F.: - No, I couldn’t and I didn’t.

P.C.: - *„No. Reviewing all my actions that followed the Securitate lines both in Timisoara and in the county, I consider I had no contribution in restoring the situation prescribed by the central bodies from Bucharest.*“

T.F.: - And, as a matter of fact, this was not my duty.

P.C.: - *„As a matter of fact, this was not my duty.*”*Well, I must repeat the question: is there any record pertaining to the modern period to acknowledge the winning of a war without a well-built intelligence system?*

T.F.: - I really don’t know! And I’m not saying that just to...

P.C.: - *You hold a bachelor degree, as far as I know...*

T.F.: - Yes. Now that you brought this up, please let me divagate too: obviously, the counter-intelligence system which I have served for almost 20 years has very strict and precise tasks as well as clearly defined enemies – and, if they’re listening to me right now, they must agree, even if we haven’t effectively met until now – that these enemies are in fact the Counter-Intelligence Services: the corps and the agents of those counter-intelligence services that are

³ *Procesul de la Timișoara (Trial of Timisoara)*, vol. I, pg. 291

⁴ *Procesul de la Timișoara (Trial of Timisoara)*, vol. I, pg. 315

acting against our country. The counter-intelligence service has not emerged now, out of the blue sky! We have inherited it ...

P.C.: - Ok, let's put ...

T.F.: - One second, if you may...

P.C.: - Please, please, you may continue if you want!

T.F.: - And we did nothing else but to continue the work. Our enemies and our preoccupations are hardly related to any aspects involving social-economical and domestic affairs. We have no such tasks and neither did we or could we have. Furthermore, since we were part of the leadership of this counterintelligence service, we struggled, as much as we could, to avoid interfering in these kinds of things. Although there were many attempts for such interferences, we managed to avoid them. We succeed following our mission and directions because we had plenty of enemies, and I am not speaking now about those who are breaking storefronts, but about professional, well-trained and qualified operatives and agents, holding bachelor degrees, as you said before; we could not cope with them without having our own highly qualified professionals able to identify, document, supervise and annihilate their covert operations in Romania. Based on the expertise I acquired during the years, I express my full conviction that the events which had taken place not only in Timisoara but within the entire country, had been fully exploited. I myself would have done the same. A certain silent and respectful agreement functions among covert and counter-intelligence agents, you know...

P.C.: - You're talking about... a certain ...etiquette.

T.F.: - Yes, an unwritten etiquette ... an unwritten etiquette. And I am more than positive that they exploited it and they brought here everything they need, to be enough for many years to come. And, honestly speaking, I do not envy those who are to work in thus system...They will have so much work to do...⁵

Lieut. Col. Anastasiu Gabriel, former locum tenens of the Chief of Domestic Intelligence Division within the State Security Department.

A.G.: - Coming back to our main topic. I declared that the only information we had and which could be gained following this line of work and which we subsequently reported in the evening of December 18th referred to the fact that there was no data to acknowledge that foreign nationals would have participated or not or otherwise would have been involved or interested in participating or acting to destabilize the situation in the county, as well as to the fact that, due

⁵ *Procesul de la Timișoara (Trial of Timisoara)*, vol. I, pg. 324-325

to the events that had happened particularly on the night of December 17th, most people ... or the Romanian students living in hostels asked for permission to leave. So, given this context, any possibility to gain information on these aspects was practically reduced to zero. There was also no data to confirm the rumours alleging that until that day, there have been certain reports that suspicious foreign or even Romanian nationals would have illegally entered the country ... to maintain or somehow participate in the events occurred here, in Timisoara.

P.C.: - And two more are left: the border...

A.G.: - As a matter of fact, I referred to the border reports: that there were no signs of...

P.C.: - Let's continue! The other institutions and the environment...

A.G.: - Yes, as a matter of fact, you have to know that little information came from the rural environment; no special events were reported then. Obviously, the officers could not travel to the villages they were responsible for, and in their absence, I have no knowledge that the constables, who were also in charge of the Securitate operations in those villages and communes who were conducting such operations under the strict supervision of the Securitate officers, would have reported any particular events to that effect.

P.C.: -And this situation referred to the entire period.

A.G.: - Yes. I was severely criticized, perhaps severely called down by Gen. Macri who admonished us (me and the officers accompanying me) that we came from Bucharest for nothing; that we haven't been able to provide any data that could be accepted by the Department officials. In fact, I think that no other counterintelligence units from different divisions gained any information to satisfy the officials from Bucharest or to consolidate the idea that such destabilization was in fact the result of the covert operations carried out by secret agents with different foreign intelligence services. However, if working by the book, this information was impossible to be gained by any intelligence unit.... I honestly do not think that any unit could have had the means or capacity to report such situation. As a matter of fact, even from Tuesday, at noon, Gen. Macri, draw our attention on the fact the he had been admonished by the Department officials for having failed to transmit the information they expected in Bucharest in relation to the events occurred in Timișoara.

P.C.: - Who was asking for such information?

A.G.: - Naturally, the officials within the State Security Department, if we take into consideration everything that had been said during the teleconference. Obviously, the information was demanded by the former government.

P.C.: - Yes. „During the entire period of December 17th to December 22nd 1989, at the level of the Domestic Intelligence Division, there have been gained accurate data and information

which acknowledged that the foreign students and other foreign nationals, as well as the Romanian villagers and former runaways did not join the street manifestations and nor did they intend to join...”

A.G.: - No such data was available...

P.C.: - „Starting with the morning of December 18th, as a consequence of the events from the preceding night, they were allowed to leave home. So they were on holiday. As at the government level there has been accredited the idea that the street demonstrations from Timisoara had been initiated, organized, supported and maintained by foreign governments, I was severely criticized by Gen. Macri to having failed to provide reliable data to be subsequently transmitted to the higher officials from the State Security Department ...”

A.G.: - Practically, we came in Timișoara for nothing (and I’m speaking about me and the officers in my unit).

P.C.: - „He admonished me that I and the five officers in the Department came in Timișoara for nothing. More exactly, we had been useless.”

A.G.: - If I may intervene, your Honour! To support my statement, I have to say that starting from Wednesday it was more than obvious that nothing pointed out to instigations or covert agents or runaways. It was all about some activities attended by workers from different fields of activity...

P.C.: - How many people attended that demonstration? Because this is what you are talking about, isn’t it?

A.G.: - I don’t know the exact number, but, from the Militia Inspectorate, I saw the columns of people and I asked my colleagues from Timisoara where those people were coming from. I learned those people were living in that area (as far I as knew, the Inspectorate was located on the Leontin Sălăjan Boulevard) including thus the UMT, the Gloves Factory, the Socks Factory. It was clear that those were properly organized columns and it was also obvious that those actions were nothing else than manifestations initiated by the population and not instigations or attempts of destabilizations made by foreign agents. Surely, we have been criticized for not being able to gain such data, but, the truth is that we could not obtain that data. Basically, I think such data has never existed.⁶

*

⁶ *Procesul de la Timișoara (Trial of Timisoara)*, vol. I, pages. 363-365

Another interesting and relevant declaration was also given by the Chief of Sibiu County Securitate, Col. Teodor Petrică, who, during the *Trial of Nicu Ceausescu*, declared:

T.P.: - Your Honour, I am pretty sure that the events from Sibiu were not accidental. The events of Sibiu were in fact a consequence of the presence of some special tactical units, here in Sibiu. I don't know who brought them, I don't know whom they belong to. Those people deployed on key point on certain buildings, because it is certain that they were, those people ...

P.C.: - „I firmly believe that the events from Sibiu were generated ...” We want your exact words! So: „...[they] were generated by the presence of some special tactical units placed in key points on certain buildings ...”

T.P.: - The buildings that surrounded the Inspectorate, the buildings from the city.

P.C.: - „...suroounding the Inspectorate, as well as from the city” Right?

T.P.: - Persons who entered our unit ...

P.C.: - „...persons who...” So they belong to those special teams, right?

T.P.: - Yes.

P.C.: - „...belonging to those special teams, they entered the premises of the General Inspectorate of Militia ...”

T.P.: - And they opened fire...

P.C.: - „...and they opened fire...”

T.P.: - ...to create panic and confusion.

P.C.: - „... to create panic and confusion..”

T.P.: - To give a reasonable reason...

P.C.: - „...To give a reasonable reason...”

T.P.: - ...for the Army of Sibiu...

P.C.: - „...for the Army of Sibiu...”

T.P.: - ...to fight back...

P.C.: - „...to fight back ...” TO what?

T.P.: - To that fire they opened.

P.C.: - „...to the fire opened by those elements.”

T.P.: - And at the same time, and I emphasize, loudly and clearly, to compromise the Securitate and Militia ...

P.C.: - „To compromise the Securitate and Militia...”

T.P.: - ...and to show that these were the bodies culpable for having created, for having murdered the victims from Sibiu.

P.C.: - „...and to create the impression that both the Securitate and Militia were guilty for the victims from Sibiu.” This is a conclusion which I inserted it word by word. Can you provide us other elements, can you try to be much clearer, and can you supply additional data, from your professional point of view, as an operative agent, in relation to the manner and the moment when these elements arrived in Sibiu? Have you had any data of how they arrived here?

T.P.: - No, Your Honour, We had no such information on the presence of those individuals in Sibiu. To be clear, and I declare this to the best of my knowledge and belief. We had no such data, not even afterwards. Nevertheless, I found out that on Wednesday night, December 20th, a ROMBAC plane, arriving from Bucharest, landed in Sibiu. The passengers of that plane were mostly men, each of them holding just a suitcase. That plane took off from Otopeni Airport and not from Băneasa, as it was the usual procedure for a plane whose final destination was Sibiu and which should have been an A.N.24 plane. I also found out that to these 80 persons, 7 other passengers joined from Sibiu. When those 7 passengers embarked on the plane, those 70-80 men, more or less, were already sitting in their seats and waiting for the plane to take off. And, I repeat myself, each of them was holding a suitcase. I do not know what they were carrying in their suitcases. All that I can tell you now, and again, I repeat myself, are simple facts that I learned later on, but, during the second appeal, I will bring witnesses in this respect. These witnesses had those aspects recorded in their charts, in their records...

P.C.: - This aspect is more than important with reference to the situation from Sibiu, so, if you have any suggestions, they might be useful to this case too.

T.P.: - No, I can't give you any witnesses! They do exist and I know them, but I cannot nominate them now because, as far I as understood, the court is not interested in this aspect! I have been warned on this fact several times now...

P.C.: - On the contrary, please feel free to give any statements and provide any details...

T.P.: - Yes, you may verify, Your Honour, and if it is not so, surely, I have given a testimony which may probably increase the punishment of 18 years in prison I have to serve, Your Honour..

P.C.: - This is not the case...

T.P.: - It doesn't matter!

P.C.: - Not for a moment did I have any suspicion on the problem of objectivity...

T.P.: - No, I take upon myself everything that I say ...

P.C.: - I asked if you could bring more information...

T.P.: - Yes!

P.C.: - To finding out the truth!

T.P.: - To find out the truth, please verify the lists of those who came from Bucharest and you will be surprised to see that their addresses from Bucharest were fabricated!!

P.C.: - *"I have no information on the existence of those elements, prior to the events from Sibiu. However, later on, I had all elements needed to make a connection which I consider reliable and accurate."* What you do not know and, you see, this is why I say we are interested in all aspects, I invite you to bring up any element you consider valid until to the moment of your hearing, the Court insisted much on this information about that plane.

T.P.: - It seems rather simple, Your Honour. There are 7 persons who came from Sibiu.

P.C.: - *As I said, my last phrase: „...that made a connection between the elements I'm speaking about and the Rombac plane travel from the night of December 20th on Otopeni-Sibiu route, about which I have information that, besides the 7 inhabitants of Sibiu, when they got on the plane, there were approximately 70-80 men, each holding a suitcase." It is about.....you know, a special suitcase or an ordinary one?*

T.P.: - No, I can't say what type of suitcase they held. I really don't know!

P.C.: - *You are free to give any other details you may think fit, because you said, that Court could not force you to provide any information you may deem essential for your defence during the second appeal. We only invite you to give us any other information, and I guess you can see the importance of this aspect for our case. In your opinion, who is responsible for the operation that had taken place in Sibiu and which had resulted in so many casualties?*

T.P.: - Yes, Your Honour, I understood! But, with all due respect I have no other data on that Rombac plane.

P.C.: - *But you do know that that boarding list contained fictional addresses, don't you?*

T.P.: - Yes.

P.C.: - *What address, what...?*

T.P.: - I was referring to those persons,I was referring to the 78 male passengers ...

P.C.: - *„I guess that, in relation to those male passengers, the addresses from Bucharest are fictive."*

T.P.: - Your Honour, from December 22nd to December 23rd, all Security officers have been arrested at the order given by the former managing board of the UM (Military Unit) 01512. Most victims, Your Honour, if you could see a checklist drawn by the investigation commission....I don't want to make any more comments on the way it had been drawn up ...

P.C.: - *The idea is....Please, focus on the main idea!*

T.P.: - Yes, I will give you the idea. You will see that most victims appeared after the December 23rd, Your Honour, from December 23rd to December 30th. Basically, 62-64 persons..

P.C.: - „I want to stipulate that most victims were registered in Sibiu, after the date of December 22nd”

T.P.: - The same date on which, practically the Security officers were arrested.

P.C.: - „A date on which, practically the Security officers were arrested.”

T.P.: - The logical question seems to be: who killed them? Who did they fight with? Was it the Army?⁷

*

To fill in this picture in terms of the involvement of the foreign agents in provoking the events from Timisoara and Bucharest, we have analyzed the statistic reports on the entries and exits of foreign nationals in/from Romania, from December 1st 1989 to December 14th 1989, prepared by the Department for Passports, Aliens’ Records and Border Crossing Control within the Ministry of Interior of the Socialist Republic of Romania. At the same time, we compared this data with the static reports from December 1st to 14th 1988 and we emphasized below our findings:

December 1 st to 14 th	Entries			Exists		
	1988	1989	Difference	1988	1989	Difference
	131.176	110.896	- 20.280	130.230	110.938	-19.329

Ranking by countries, in terms of entries and exits of foreign nationals⁸:

December 15 th	Entries				Exits
	Total	Business purposes	Transit	Personal interest	
	10.896	307	5.887	4.700	9.076
Bulgaria	2.303	22	1.491	790	1.669
Yugoslavia	1.528	2	389	1.137	967
Hungary	1.240	120	85	1.035	998
U.S.S.R.	3.317	53	2.207	1.057	2.549
December 19 th	Entries				Exits

⁷ *Procesul lui Nicu Ceaușescu (Trial of Nicu Ceaușescu)*, tape no. 20, the AMR archive, Audio documentary collection no. 2.

⁸ Reports drawn up by the Department for Passports, Aliens’ Records and Border Crossing Control within the Ministry of Interior of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

	Total	Business purposes	Transit	Personal interest	
	4.478	252	4.226	-	4.802
Bulgaria	1.017	23	994	-	1.084
Yugoslavia	26	3	23	-	11
Hungary	217	141	76	-	422
U.S.S.R.	2.522	62	2.460	-	1.988

December 20 th	Entries				Exits
	Total	Business purposes	Transit	Personal interest ⁹	
	3.971	282	3.698	-	7.101
Bulgaria	984	31	953	-	983
Yugoslavia	40	4	36	-	137
Hungary	204	133	71	-	280
U.S.S.R.	2.091	26	2.065	-	3.978

Macri Emil, Teodorescu Filip and Anastasiu Gabriel arrived in Timișoara in the morning of December 17th 1989 particularly to identify the foreign agents allegedly involved in the events occurred in the city as well as to confirm the interference of certain states in the domestic affairs of Romania. Nonetheless, according to the information and data that have been gathered and analyzed and, as much as they would have wanted to prove those suppositions, they had failed and consequently, had had to invalidate such allegations in the reports sent to Bucharest.

The statistics compiled by the Department for Passports, Aliens' Records and Border Crossing Control within the Ministry of Interior of the Socialist Republic of Romania, point out that the number of foreign citizens who have entered the country, from December 1st to December 14th 1989, decreased by 20.280 people compared to the number afferent to the same period of the previous year.

Nevertheless, it is ancient history that "unidentified individuals" did exist and acted in different areas of the city during those tumultuous days. I will remind here just two factual examples of their involvement in the events that took place in Timisoara in 1989. Almost all storefronts from the centre of the city have been smashed on December 16th and 17th 1989. In this respect there are tens of testimonies given by the demonstrators, depicting in great details all those who have broken the store windows. They were bald-headed, robust, well-dressed

⁹ The column "personal interest" includes the persons who have entered the country as tourists and those who have been involved in the small-scale cross-border traffic.

young men, equipped with special truncheons, who, after smashing down the storefronts, one by one, by quick and well-practiced hits, were instantly leaving, with no attempt whatsoever to steal or break in and enter the stores they've just vandalized. Those individuals were also seen by the law enforcement officers deployed in the area, who, surprisingly or not, have taken no actions against them but against the protesters who were demonstrating against the communist regime. Another peculiar aspect reported by numerous eyewitnesses refers particularly to the days of December 17th – 19th when, amongst the military cordons deployed in the most important areas of the city, between soldiers, one could see older shabby individuals, wearing partial military uniforms, who were definitely no soldiers.

Who were those “unidentified individuals”? Why did some circles insist, even vehemently, to endorse the idea that people had been brought out into the streets by foreign secret agents? Why, even after 20 years, allegations such as “the bodies of those who had been burnt at “Cenusa” Crematory were in fact the bodies of some covert agents”, are still being made? Far from attempting to find an answer to all these questions, at this point in time, I am confident that such answers do exist and eventually, they will come to light.

Gino **RADO**