

# **The Anticommunist Romanian Revolution of 1989**

**By  
Marius Mioc**

(Written for people with little knowledge  
about Romania)

4<sup>th</sup> edition

Artpress Publishing House  
Timisoara

© Marius Mioc, 2007  
1<sup>st</sup> edition 2002  
ISBN 978-973-108-096-3

## Short Romanian History

Romania is a country with 22 million inhabitants, located in South-eastern Europe.

The Romanian nation was formed after the conquest of the Dacian tribes<sup>1</sup> by the Roman Empire during Emperor Trajan (101-106 AD)<sup>2</sup>.

The ruling of Rome in the North of the Danube, a territory that is part of present Romania, lasted until 271 AD, when Emperor Aurelian ordered the retreat of the Roman army. A small part of the present Romanian territory, Dobrogea (Dobruja), which lies in the South of the Danube, remained part of the Roman Empire for a longer time.

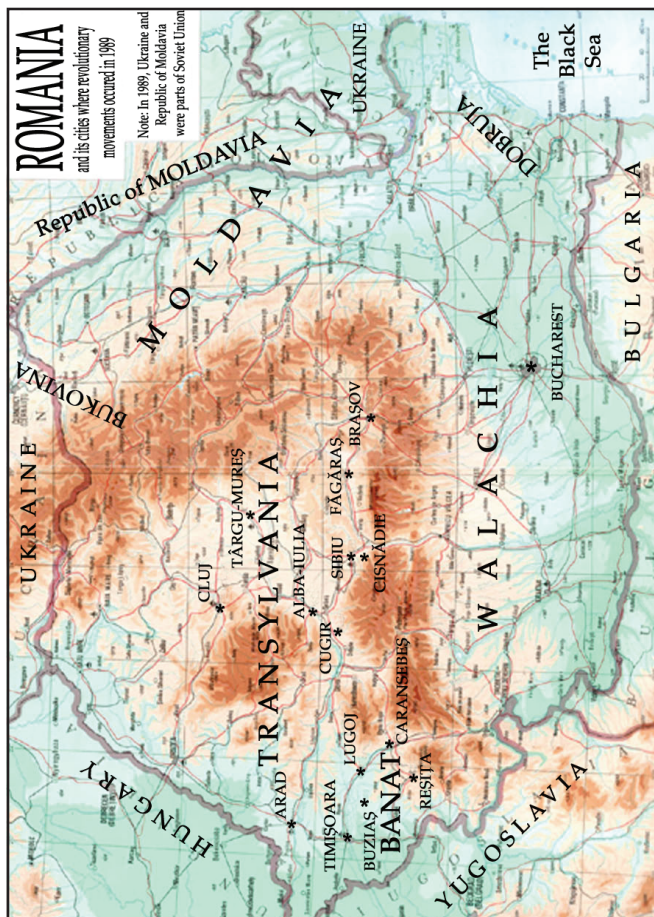
During the Roman domination, colonists from all over the Empire came to (present) Romania. Latin was assimilated also by the Dacians.

*An alternate theory states that the Dacians were already speaking a language that was very similar to Latin, and the Romanian language of today is the direct*

---

<sup>1</sup> As the ancient Greek historian Herodot says, the Dacians were “the most brave and courageous of all Thracians”.

<sup>2</sup> To celebrate the victory in the Dacians wars, Emperor Trajan ordered a column to be built in Rome. This column has lasted until today.





*descendant of the old Dacian (Thracian) language. However, as no written document in Dacian was found, there are no sufficient proofs to support this theory. What is sure is that Romanian is part of the Romance languages and that the Roman Empire ruled part of the present Romanian territory.*

Saint Apostle Andrew brought Christianity to Romania. Romania remained outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire, but was in close contact with it. Today Orthodox Christianity is the religion of 95% of the ethnic Romanians.

Slavic and Hungarian invasions came over Romanian territory. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in the battle at Posada, the Romanian prince Basarab defeated the Hungarian king Charles Robert of Anjou and won the independence for Walachia<sup>3</sup>, the Southern part of actual Romania. Another state was formed in Eastern Romania, Moldavia, while the West of the country (Transylvania) was an autonomous principality ruled by kings of Hungarian origin. Hungarian and German colonists were brought to Transylvania.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, after the end of the Byzantine Empire, Moldavia and Walachia became vassal states of

---

<sup>3</sup> Until the 19th century, “walachs” or “vlachs” was the name the foreigners used to designate the Romanians. In some countries these names are used as alternatives for Romanians even today.

the Turkish Empire. However, they maintained a degree of autonomy.

Princes like Vlad Tepes (Vlad the Impaler) in Walachia and Stefan cel Mare (Stephen the Great) in Moldavia fought against the Turkish rule. They won several battles but they never obtained complete independence. In 1600, Prince Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave) unified Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, but this union lasted only one year.

While Transylvania was conquered by Austria, Moldavia and Walachia remained under Turkish domination. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Turks imposed foreigners of Greek origin as rulers of Moldavia and Walachia. In 1812, after the Russian-Turkish war, half of Moldavia's territory (Bessarabia) was annexed to Russia.

In 1821, Tudor Vladimirescu led an uprising against the Turks, at the same time with the Greek rebellion. This made the Ottoman Empire to allow rulers of Romanian origin in Moldavia and Walachia. In 1859, as Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected ruler of both Moldavia and Walachia, the two principalities were united under the name of Romania (the formal recognition of the union took place in 1862).

Meanwhile, in 1784, the Romanian peasants in Transylvania rose up against their landowners, who were often of Hungarian or German origin. The rebellion was

put down and its leaders killed. In 1848, the Romanian Revolutionary Army of Transylvania, led by Avram Iancu, fought against the Hungarian Revolutionary Army, in order to avoid the annexation of Transylvania to Hungary.

In 1867, after the constitutional change in Austria (that became Austria-Hungary), Transylvania was part of Hungary. The Romanians from Transylvania, who were the majority of the population, never accepted this change.

In 1877, Romania claimed independence from Turkey, an ideal that was fulfilled after the 1877-1878 Independence War.

In World War I Romania joined the Allies. After the war, Transylvania, Banat, Bukovina and Bessarabia, territories where ethnic Romanians represented the majority of the population, united with Romania, based on the principle of self-determination expressed by the American president Woodrow Wilson.

Land reform and general right of vote for males were the main democratic changes introduced after World War I.

In 1940, following the Hitler-Stalin pact, Russia occupied Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. In the same year Hitler forced Romania to cede Hungary half of Transylvania.

In 1941, the Romanian troops started the war against Russia in order to recover Bessarabia and Northern

Bukovina. In 1944 the Russian Army entered Romania and imposed a communist regime. At the end of World War II, Romania was forced to give up its territorial claims against the Soviet Union, but was given Transylvania back from Hungary.

In 1946, through rigged elections, the communists won full control of the country. Soon they would ban all opposition parties. King Michael was forced to abdicate in 1947 and the country was transformed into a Soviet satellite.

The Russian Army left Romania only in 1958, when the reparations for World War II were completed.

In 1965, after the death of party leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, power was passed to Nicolae Ceausescu.

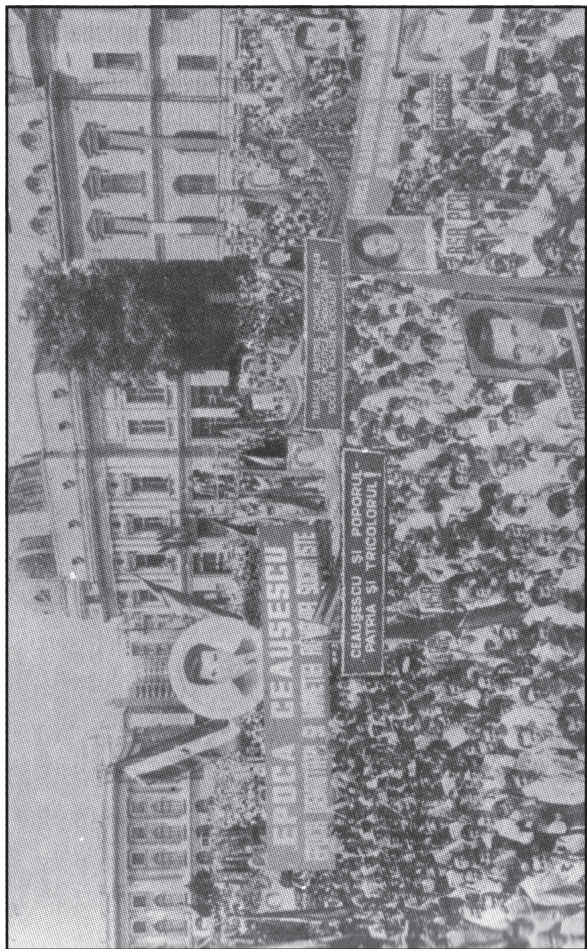
## **Romania during Ceausescu's Dictatorship**

What made thousands of Romanians risk their lives in 1989 in their fight against the communist regime? In order to understand this, a short presentation of the life in Romania in the period preceding the Revolution is necessary.

Political freedom was not allowed in Romania during the communist regime. Neither was freedom for press or speech. The television programme lasted only two hours every day and was full of political propaganda. The personality cult of president Ceausescu was omnipresent. The TV and radio programmes and the newspapers were full of comments about how good president Ceausescu was, what a genius he was, how the entire world spun around him and how the entire Romanian people loved their president. This kind of propaganda was present even in schools, where children learnt songs that glorified president Ceausescu.

The cultural life was strangled by the political regime.

It was almost impossible to find a good thing to see on TV. The censorship was present even in music. The communist authorities rejected different kinds of music (rock, for example), not necessarily for political reasons; they just did not like them. Consequently, they were very rare in TV or radio programmes.



A meeting organised by the communist authorities.  
The participants were carrying portraits of Ceausescu and his wife

The history was falsified in schools and newspapers. One direction of falsifying history was to increase the role of the communist party and president Ceausescu in some historical events. Old books were not available in libraries, exactly for the reason of hiding the past.

Even literature was censored. Writers whose works were not “politically correct” from the communist point of view were not allowed to print their books. Translations from other languages were very few, and of course, only “politically correct” works were translated.

Because of the strict control over everything that was printed there was a shortage of good books to read or good movies to see, even about themes not related with politics.

Even the classic Romanian writers were forbidden. For example, the communist authorities accepted Mihai Eminescu, a poet from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the main Romanian poet. His opera was taught in schools. However, parts of his writings were not available, because they did not comply with the politics of the government. Eminescu was not clever enough to foresee the benefits of communism (in his time the Communist Party didn't exist in Romania).

The economic situation was getting worse and worse. A system of fake reporting was developed in the economy.

The propaganda spoke only about the great results of the Romanian economy. In the real life people were

faced with a shortage of many products. In order to buy some milk, for example, you had to queue at the grocery for 1-2 hours early in the morning. The price was low, but only those people who woke up early in the morning and were ready to waste one or two hours could get milk – this is how the communist system works. However, the situation was different for people with connections – the communist nomenclature – for whom it was easy to obtain things not available for ordinary citizens.

However, there were shortages that upset even the communist nomenclature – for example, electricity was cut off quite often, for saving reasons.

The state controlled the entire economy. All major plants were state-owned, as in all communist countries. Every year the government issued a plan that was detailed for every economic branch separately and established how much should be produced. Every plant had its own production plan and had to report its results. But they could not report that they had not accomplished the plan - it would have been against the official propaganda that said that the Romanian economy was prosperous. The result was fake reporting.

For example, let's say that according to the plan, a plant had to produce 1,000 cars. The real production was 500, but they reported 1,200. The newspapers would write: "Look at this factory, how effective it is;



it produces even more than it was planned.” And the plant manager was promoted for his good results.

Because of the fake reporting system even the government missed reliable data in order to take right decisions. The result was the worsening of Romania’s economy.

However, the propaganda sustained that the Romanian people were very happy to have such a good ruler like Nicolae Ceausescu. The whole system was based on his personal power. The members of the Ceausescu family held high positions in the government. His wife, Elena, was declared as a very important scholar by the propaganda. She was head of the National Council for Science. One of Ceausescu’s brothers (Ilie) was a general in the Army. Another one (Nicolae Andruta) was a general in the secret police (the *Securitate*). His son, Nicu, was the head of the Communist Party in Sibiu County. Ceausescu’s words were considered more important even than the communist dogma. For propaganda, what Ceausescu said was more important even than what Karl Marx had said.

When elections were organised, the official results were that the government received 99% of the votes. The Communist Party was the only one allowed to exist. Even if for a place in the Parliament there were two or more

candidates, all were supporters of the government. Their programme was identical: how good president Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena were (by the end of Ceausescu's dictatorship, the high-ranking party officials were obliged to make reference not only to the president but also his wife in their speeches).

An effective way of keeping control of the society was through jobs. Any person who wanted a good job had to be a Communist Party member. As a result, many people joined the Communist Party for opportunistic reasons, without believing in the communist ideology. This could be seen during the Romanian Revolution, when members of the Communist Party could be found among the people who fought against the regime.

*Of the whole 23 million people, 3 million were members of the Communist Party.*

As Romania had a state-owned economy, almost all jobs were under government control. In a free-market economy, a person in conflict with his boss has the chance to find a better job somewhere else. In communism, the government rules everything. A person who is on the "black list" of the authorities has no chance to find a good job, irrespective of his or her professional results. It was not necessary to criticise the government

openly in order to see your name on the “black list”. It was enough to avoid participating in demonstrations in favour of the regime (sometimes the Communist Party organised mass rallies to prove to the outside world what a strong support it had among Romanian people).

When Gorbachev started the liberalisation politics in the Soviet Union, the Romanian mass media did not even mention about it. The Romanian newspapers were acting as nothing special was happening in the Soviet Union.

*A Romanian joke from communist times: God decided to allow Napoleon to return to Earth. Napoleon visited three countries: the USA, the Soviet Union and Romania. After his visit in the USA he was asked: what did you like best in America? He answered: The Army. If I had had an Army like the American one, I wouldn't have lost the battle at Waterloo. After his visit in the Soviet Union, he was asked the same question. He answered: I liked the KGB (the Soviet secret police) best. If I had had a secret police like KGB, I wouldn't have lost the battle at Waterloo. After the visit in Romania, his answer was: the best thing in Romania is the press. If I had had a press like the Romanian one, nobody would have noticed that I had lost the battle at Waterloo.*

Only in 1989 some articles were published in the Romanian press saying that some countries (that were not mentioned) were not following the correct path of socialism. Nothing could be found in the Romanian press about the fall of the Berlin wall, for example.

However, people were informed about the changes in Eastern Europe through western radio stations that were broadcasting in Romanian. Radio Free Europe (sponsored by US government) or the BBC London Romanian programme had a lot of audience in Romania at that time, as official media had no credibility. In the border regions like Timisoara (a city near the Hungarian and Yugoslavian borders) people were watching the TV programmes of the neighbouring countries. In Timisoara, the Yugoslavian and Hungarian programmes were very popular and they provided information about the political situation in communist countries. The Yugoslavian TV had also programmes in Romanian for the Romanian minority in Voivodina. Such programmes were not very political, but people were able to see something else than the official propaganda.

In 1989 the wind of change started to blow in all Eastern Europe. Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, Bulgaria allowed the right of people to choose their rulers through democratic elections. It was obvious that the Soviet Army was no longer a danger for democratic changes.

*In 1956 the Soviet Army put down the Hungarian Revolution and in 1968 it stopped the democratic evolution in Czechoslovakia. The Romanians were afraid that if a movement for democracy started in Romania, the Soviet Army would not allow it.*

After Gorbachev had started the reforms, more and more people in Romania had the courage to criticise the regime openly. In 1987 in Brasov (a city in Southern Transylvania) the workers protested against their living conditions. The authorities put an end to the protest in one day and the leaders were arrested. However, the number of the intellectuals criticising the regime increased and the Romanians were familiar with their names (mainly through Radio Free Europe). Doina Cornea, Mircea Dinescu, Dan Petrescu, Silviu Brucan, Laszlo Tokes, Petre Mihai Bacanu were some of the people who openly disagreed with the politics of the government.

The official propaganda claimed that everybody appreciated Ceausescu's regime. Nothing was published in the press about the dissidents - not even for blaming them. It was as if they did not exist.

In Romania there was a law that forbade propaganda against socialism. However, the regime tried to avoid using it. To apply that law meant to admit that there really was an opposition against the regime, and this was what the government wanted to avoid.

*For example, Petre Mihai Bacanu, a journalist who was involved in the publishing of an illegal newspaper, was sentenced to prison, officially not for political reasons but for illegal economic activities.*

## **The Development of the Laszlo Tokes Case**

Laszlo Tokes, a priest of the Hungarian Reformed (Calvinist) Church, was appointed secondary priest of the Timisoara parish in 1986. In 1987, after the main priest had died, he was in charge with the parish.

*According to the census in 1992, there are 1.6 million Hungarians in Romania, which represent 7.1% of the whole population. In Timisoara, the Hungarians represent 9% of the population. The Hungarian minority is divided between the Catholic and the Reformed Church.*

Laszlo Tokes had had problems with the authorities even before his appointment in Timisoara, while he was a priest in Dej, a town in central Transylvania. He participated in the publishing of the illegal magazine “Ellenpontok” (in Hungarian). In 1983 he was dismissed and remained unemployed for two years. Dej belonged to the diocese of Cluj. Finally Tokes managed to find a job, but only in Timisoara, which belonged to the diocese of Oradea.

*The Hungarian Reformed Church of Romania has two dioceses: one in Cluj and one in Oradea.*

In October 31<sup>st</sup> 1988 the Hungarian Reformed Church organised a cultural manifestation without the approval of the communist authorities. Although the manifestation was not openly against the regime, it included the reading of poems by some authors who were on the black list of the authorities. The authorities told the organisers that another similar manifestation would not be tolerated.

Despite the warning of the authorities, a second similar event was organised on December 4<sup>th</sup> 1988. Its organisers were the Reformed Church of Laszlo Tokes and the members of the amateur theatre troupe “Thalia”.

The authorities dismantled “Thalia”, an amateur student troupe that performed in Hungarian. It had the logistic support of the Students House that was controlled by “The Union of Communists Students” (the only student organisation that existed at that time in Romania). Later, “Thalia” was reorganised, but without the people who had participated in the second cultural manifestation at the Reformed Church.

Laszlo Tokes wrote a letter to the Reformed bishop of Oradea, Laszlo Papp. In it, he asked for support for those members of “Thalia” who had been excluded from the troupe as a result of their participation in the manifestations organised by the Reformed Church. The letter was read at Radio Budapest in May 1989, making Laszlo Tokes’ name widely known.



*Many members of the Hungarian minority and also many Romanians who spoke Hungarian listened to Radio Budapest.*

Tokes also protested against the governmental plan of the rural systematisation. This plan, initiated by Ceausescu himself, was based on the idea that it was better for the Romanian people to live in bigger villages than in smaller ones. In order to achieve this goal, many small villages were planned to be destroyed and the population to be moved in new houses in larger settlements. The opinion of the people who were to be moved did not matter to authorities. For them, it was inconceivable that somebody could think differently than “the genius of the Carpathians”, as the propaganda used to call Nicolae Ceausescu.

Soon, Tokes became one of the best-known dissidents in Romania, with the help of the Hungarian TV and Radio Free Europe that transmitted programmes in Romanian. Interviews with Tokes appeared on the Hungarian TV. In Timisoara, which is not far from the Hungarian border, the Hungarian TV was very popular. The number of the people coming to his church service increased; in the autumn of 1989 even people who didn't belong to the Reformed Church started to attend his sermons.

The reaction of the authorities came soon. Harassment started not only against Tokes, but also against his friends.

*Gazda Arpad, a close friend of Laszlo Tokes, confesses: "Starting with the summer of 1989 the pressure of the authorities became more obvious. Policemen identified those who entered Laszlo Tokes' house. For tens of times my name was written in their notes, as the policemen demanded to see my ID several times. At the beginning, they didn't ask my ID just in front of the house. I was followed and, half an hour later, in another part of the city, I was identified. This happened to all those visited Tokes.*

*Several pressures were made. Psychological pressures, not threats. Once I was arrested and taken to the Police headquarters. They kept me half a day, asked me where I had been the day before, and told me that I was suspected of stealing from a store.*

*From October I was moved with my job in Lugoj (a town 50 km from Timisoara). I was forced to commute such a long distance for work daily. This was difficult, of course. Other friends of Tokes had similar experiences. One was moved in Bucharest and two physicists, Balaton Zoltan and Varga Lajos, were sent 800 km away, at Cernavoda"<sup>4</sup>.*

However, the authorities wanted to avoid accusing

---

<sup>4</sup> See "Revolutia din Timisoara asa cum a fost" (The Revolution of Timisoara As It Was) by Marius Mioc, Brumar Publishing House, Timisoara 1997 (Romanian), p. 7-13.

Tokes openly for political reasons. They chose to apply the method of harassment through profession, as in other similar cases.

Under the pressure of the authorities, the bishop of Oradea, Laszlo Papp, took the decision of moving Tokes to Mineu, a village in Northern Transylvania. In a small village, they thought, Tokes would be isolated and not dangerous. The bishop appointed another priest (Makay Botond) in Timisoara.

Tokes refused to move. The people in his parish supported him.

As a result, the bishop stopped paying his salary. He also started a suit against Tokes, ordering him to evacuate the flat he lived in. The flat was the propriety of the church and it was located in the same building as the church. Meanwhile, unknown people broke its windows.

A judge decision ordered Tokes to evacuate the flat by December 15<sup>th</sup> 1989, otherwise he would be evacuated by force.

On Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup>, during the usual church service, Tokes announced that he expected to be evacuated from his flat by force in December 15<sup>th</sup>.

In December 15<sup>th</sup>, a small crowd of Tokes' supporters gathered near the Reformed Church. In the evening it numbered almost 200 people. Two representatives of the authorities - mayor Petru Mot and the chairman of the "Front of Democracy and Socialist

Unity”<sup>5</sup>, Rotarescu, came to dialogue with the people. They wanted to settle the situation down. They promised to stop harassment against Tokes, on condition that he would tell the people to go home. Indeed, the people were told to go home.

Next day the people gathered near the Reformed Church again. The rumours about the priest’s case spread in the city and many came to see what was happening, some of them out of curiosity. As the crowd was increasing, in the evening slogans against Ceausescu’s regime were shouted. According to Tokes’ testimony, in December 16<sup>th</sup> mayor Mot was ready to make a written promise that Tokes would not be evacuated, if his supporters went home. Tokes tried to follow the deal he had made with authorities, telling the crowd to go home, but he lost control of the situation. The demonstrators didn’t want only the solving of his case. They also demanded the fall of Ceausescu’s regime. In the evening 80% of the crowd that was near his church was formed of ethnic Romanians<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> A political organisation during Ceausescu’s regime which included the Communist Party and the people who were not members of the Communist Party, but supported the politics of the government.

<sup>6</sup> See Tokes’ testimony in *“Reportaj cu sufletul la gura” (An Out of Breath Reportage)* by Titus Suci, Facla Publishing House, Timisoara 1990, (Romanian), p. 10-17.

## The Development of the Revolution

A tram railway was passing not far from Tokes' house (there was a tram stop in Maria Square). Some revolutionaries (as we can already call the people of the crowd near Tokes' house) decided to stand on the railway. The trams were blocked and the passengers had to descend. This was a smart move - the crowd increased significantly.

Part of the crowd took the decision to go to the student campus to make more people join them. However, when they arrived there, the reaction of the students was disappointing. Only few of them joined the protesters. It seemed that many students were afraid; to be seen in such a crowd could have caused their expulsion from the University. The crowd continued its way towards the county headquarters of the Communist Party. More and more people joined it. At the communist headquarters, the symbol of the hammer and the sickle was thrown down.

Fire fighters, policemen and soldiers were sent to stop the movement.

*Adrian Kali, a revolutionary who was shot later, relates: "A fire-fighters' truck came sprinkling the demonstrators. We ran after it. Its windows were broken and I managed to catch at it. The driver panicked when he saw the three of us on his car and stopped it in the*

wall of a house. A lieutenant was weeping and asked to be forgiven, as he was only obeying his orders. The truck was bombarded with stones. A towel was put on the truck, as a sign of peace, when from the bridge came two buses full of soldiers with shields. They descended and made a lot of noise. They hit their shields with their sticks and were shouting at us to leave. Near me, an elegant woman wearing a fur coat told us that we were cowards and good for nothing, than she hit a policeman with her handbag. The soldiers attacked us. It was a scuffle. People were throwing stones, bottles and clods against the soldiers. Other policemen appeared and struck the people in the street.

The crowd was scattered. I left with a group, helping a friend who had been hit in the head with a bottle of vodka. During the fight, this friend managed to dismantle a guide post, which he used to hit the feet of the shield bearers, who were falling on the ground”<sup>7</sup>.

Small groups of demonstrators, scattered from near the Communist Party headquarters, regrouped and started towards Buziasului Road (the south-eastern part of the city), where there were many factories. They tried to

---

<sup>7</sup> See “*Revolutia din Timisoara asa cum a fost*” (*The Revolution of Timisoara As It Was*) by Marius Mioc, Brumar Publishing House, Timisoara 1997 (Romanian), p. 14-18.

persuade the workers to join them, but they failed. The authorities tried to stop them. Near “Banatul” factory the demonstrators conquered another fire brigade truck. Near the Detergents factory, two other trucks of soldiers met the protesters. However, the appeal “The Army is with us!” shouted by the demonstrators was convincing enough. The soldiers didn’t want to start a conflict with the crowd and let it go further.

The crowd kept advancing towards the workers’ neighbourhoods. In Girocului Road, many people joined them.

Meanwhile, near Tokes’ house, in Maria Square, where a part of the original crowd remained, fightings with the policemen took place. The authorities managed to push the crowd towards the bridge over the Bega, clearing the street where Laszlo Tokes’ house was. The priest was arrested that night, and forcibly moved with his wife and furniture to Mineu village.

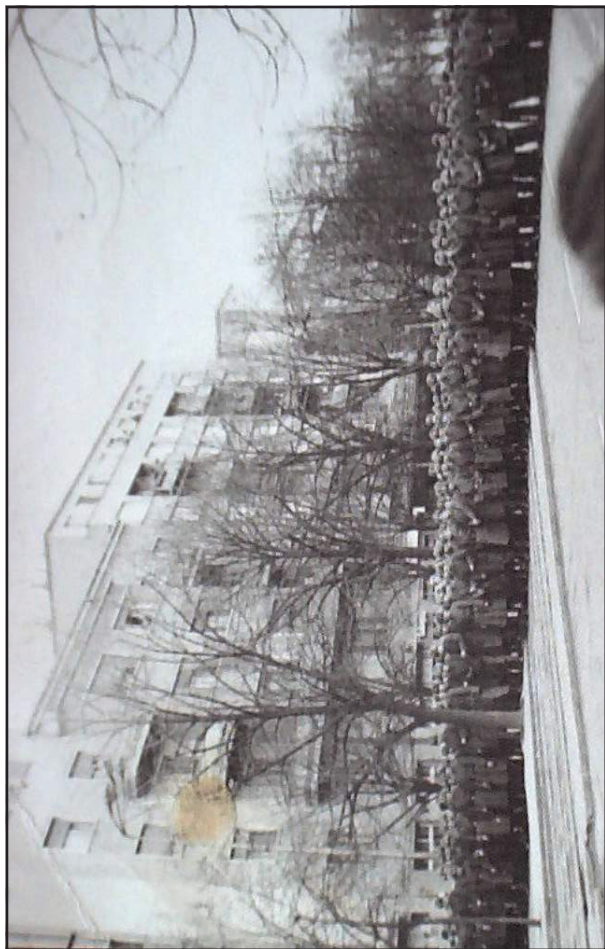
From Maria Square the crowd moved to the centre of the city, in front of the Orthodox Cathedral. There were about 600 people in front of the cathedral. One of them, Sorin Oprea, had the idea of moving through the city, in order to make the events known by as many people as possible. In the student campus they joined the crowd that was coming from Girocului Road. Now, the crowd that numbered around 10,000 people went northwards. On Circumvalatiunii Street the demonstrators passed

peacefully by a group of soldiers, who did not take action against them. When the crowd reached Torontalului Road, they were attacked by soldiers with clubs and scattered. It was already 4 o'clock in the morning. Many revolutionaries were arrested (almost 1,000, including those in the following days).

Until December 15<sup>th</sup>, the protest movement was concentrated near the Reformed Church. In the night of December 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>, the revolutionary movement covered a large part of the city, from the southern parts of Girocului and Buziasului to the northern areas (Dacia Square). The movement was not a secret for Timisoara's inhabitants, although mass media did not mention a word about it.

December 17<sup>th</sup> is known as "the bloody Sunday". People gathered in the downtown area and in the outlying districts of Girocului, Lipovei, Aradului and Buziasului again. The Army joined the Police and the Secret Police in the attempt to stop the Revolution. A platoon was parading with the fighting banner in the centre of the city. A crowd of demonstrators gathered in the town centre. In the afternoon they moved towards the student campus and the Communist Party headquarters. The attempt to stop them with fire brigade trucks that sprinkled water failed. At the Continental Hotel the trams were blocked and soldiers were disposed across the street. The crowd attacked, the soldiers ran. The headquarters of





December 17<sup>th</sup>: A barrier of soldiers ready to stop the revolutionaries

the Communist Party was in the hands of the revolutionaries. The clerks from inside ran out through the back doors and windows. Windows were broken and all the things related to the regime (portraits of the president Ceausescu, communist flags) were destroyed. Some officers who were in the building were assaulted.

After a counter-attack of the Secret police troops, the building was conquered back. The troops hit the demonstrators with sticks and bayonets. Many were arrested and badly beaten. The demonstrators retired towards the Decebal Bridge, and kept fighting against armoured vehicles.

The Central Committee of the Communist party met under the rule of Nicolae Ceausescu and decided to take resolute action against the revolution, even by opening fire against the demonstrators. However, no mention about the events was to be seen in the official media. Nicolae Ceausescu criticised the Ministers of Armed Forces, Police and Secret Service for their lack of resolution.

Clashes between demonstrators and troops took place in Traian Square and in Liberty Square. People threw stones and bottles at tanks and armoured vehicles.

*Traian Orban, a revolutionary who was shot in the leg, says: "The soldiers started to move towards Liberty Square, trying to spread the crowd and to arrest the most active demonstrators. A citizen wanted to talk to them, asking them to be understanding because we did*

*not want to harm anyone. As a result, he was arrested and hit with the butts. (...) The soldiers chased us, trying to scatter us. I ran towards Liberty Square. A tank was following us at high speed, with a caterpillar on the sidewalk, crushing the protective railing. It almost caught my leg. After the tank had passed, some people took the furniture from the "Macul Rosu" confectionery, and built a barricade, which they put on fire. Tanks were moving everywhere, on sidewalks and on green areas. At a certain moment, a tank stopped near a tram and young people surrounded it. Some boys wanted to block it, they blocked the caterpillars with various objects. I helped them by forcing a cable between the wheels of the caterpillar. The tank was blocked, but its engine was still working and its turret was rotating. A boy was riding on its cannon. I told to the youngsters to stop up its exhaust with rags. The engine of the tank stopped and the crowd burst into cheers. After a while, soldiers scattered us and recovered the tank.*

*Two armoured vehicles (quicker than the tanks) were moving through the square. Somebody had the idea to fill bottles with fuel. They took fuel from the cars parked in the square. After a while, one vehicle was retreating in flames, in the cheers of the demonstrators. From the headquarters of the 18<sup>th</sup> Army Division (which was in Liberty Square) shots were being fired in the air (I didn't see anybody wounded).*

*On hearing the shots, hundreds of demonstrators came from the centre of the city. Among them were many who had left the square before. This group was very resolute. They shouted slogans like "Freedom!", "Today in Timisoara, tomorrow in the entire country!". The shots became more frequent, but still in the air. I started to talk to the soldiers who were near Caraiman Street. I told them that they should not shoot us, because we were their brothers, and the Army must defend the country, not kill its own people. Some demonstrators gave cigarettes to the soldiers. A soldier was crying; he told me that they had been in a mission since 5 o'clock in the morning, they hadn't eaten anything and he showed me that he had no bullets.*

*As the shots intensified, we wanted to retreat. When I arrived at the corner of Karl Marx Street, I saw three people in civilian clothes exiting from the Army headquarters (10 meters away) and opening fire without challenge. Somebody was wounded near me. When I turned to him the blood splashed on my face. I heard somebody shouting that a soldier was also shot, and then I felt a terrible pain in my left leg. I was shot myself."<sup>8</sup>.*

The shots in the centre were heard in the entire city. Groups of people were discussing the events. In Girocului

---

<sup>8</sup> See "*Revolutia din Timisoara asa cum a fost*" (*The Revolution of Timisoara As It Was*) by Marius Mioc, Brumar Publishing House, Timisoara 1997 (Romanian), p. 35-38.

Road people got organised, in order not to allow other military units to advance towards the town centre.

*Gheorghe Curpas, a participant in the events on Girocului Road, says: "We were around 2,000 people divided in small groups. The sight of a column of tanks united us. Now we had a target: we should not allow the tanks to pass towards downtown. We were no longer a gathering of people who did not know what they wanted, we were a combat unit. Some of us pushed two trolley-buses so that the access towards downtown was blocked. Others raised a barricade on Lidia Street. When the tanks grouped in front of the barrage, two other trolley-buses were moved so that the tanks were caught between two insurmountable lines. The nimblest of us penetrated between the tanks with crowbars trying to cause as much damages as possible. After we surrounded the tanks we jumped on them, tried to put them on fire and remove the soldiers from inside them. We told them: Come out and nothing will happen to you! They refused. Then we started to hit the tanks with crowbars. After a while, an officer opened the trap-door and shouted: "The army is with you!" What? Why hadn't he come out until then? Somebody hit him in the head with a stone. When we saw blood, we went to help him immediately. We took him to the nearest block of flats, where we bandaged his head"*<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> See "Reportaj cu sufletul la gura" (An Out of Breath Reportage) by Titus Suciuc, Facla Publishing House, Timisoara 1990, (Romanian language), page. 66-67.

A barricade was also built in Buziasului Road to prevent the army units from moving towards the centre of the city. In Lipovei Road, fire against the demonstrators was opened from the military unit. Six of them died and 30 were wounded.

Many stores were destroyed; book stores that displayed president Ceausescu's books in their windows attracted the demonstrators' rage particularly.

A column of demonstrators moved towards the Decebal Bridge, which was near the county headquarters of the Communist Party. The police headquarters where many demonstrators had been imprisoned the day before was in the same direction. Some thought of trying to free the prisoners. The army units were waiting for the demonstrators.

*Adrian Kali: "When we were shifting towards Decebal Bridge, on that narrow street, I heard shots. Somebody said that they were fake bullets, just to scare us. However, when I saw the flames from the barrels in the darkness, I realised that the bullets were real. I ran towards the other people and I pushed them to the ground. Many demonstrators followed my example. When I threw myself to the ground, I was hit for the first time in the back. Above our heads, the helicopter turned on its searchlight, lightening the place. Moments of terror followed. The bullets were hit-*

*ting the rocks near me. I put my hands on my head, thinking that if I were shot in the hand, my head would be protected. I shouted: don't shoot, we are yours brothers! The answer was: hang you all! Then I saw my friend Iovanovici raising his head. I dashed upon him to protect him and then I was shot the second time. I felt as if an auger had pierced my back and chest. I rose and ran, trampling on human bodies. At the corner of the park I met two friends. Blood was running down my back and out of my mouth. They dragged me near a young man who had been shot his leg"<sup>10</sup>.*

Bloody conflicts also occurred in Lipovei Road, near the military unit that was located close to the flat buildings.

*Ion Ghinea remembers: "Many friends came to me and we talked about the possible turn of events. I received phone calls from acquaintances, telling me that people were shot in the downtown area. From the Green Forest (a small wood just outside the city) a column of about 50 demonstrators was coming, shouting: "People, come out! Do you have electricity? Do you have heat?" I put on a jacket quickly, went out and stood in the front of the column. We moved on to Lotusului*

---

<sup>10</sup> See "Revolutia din Timisoara asa cum a fost" (The Revolution of Timisoara As It Was), p. 17-18.

*Street, intending to go to Lipovei Road, and then to the Opera House, where we knew we would find many demonstrators. Before reaching Lipovei Road, 60 meters from the gate of the military unit, fire was opened against us, without warning. I was shot in the chest, near the heart”<sup>11</sup>.*

Sometimes, people were shot without a clear reason.

*Anton Suharu says: “Near the bridge over the Bega I saw a truck of noisy soldiers was coming from Badea Cartan Square. It was moving slowly, and it turned towards me. When it arrived near me, the soldiers ordered me to stop! I stopped. They laughed and opened fire, while they shouted at me: run! I felt burns in my hair, on my head, and a hit in the back. After 3-4 meters I fell down. I heard two women yelling: “You killed him, you murderers!”, but I rose and tried to run towards Badea Cartan Square. I fell and I rose again. I didn’t know what was happening to me. When I reached the bridge, under the pole light, I realised that I had been shot in my right leg. Then I felt a terrible pain”<sup>12</sup>.*

In the evening, in Girocului Road, the Army tried to recover the tanks that the revolutionaries had conquered before.

---

<sup>11</sup> See “*Revolutia din Timisoara asa cum a fost*” (*The Revolution of Timisoara As It Was*), p. 93.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, p. 100-101.



*Mihai Ciofu remembers: “Armoured vehicles and tanks with soldiers near them were coming from Giroc village. We, about 250 demonstrators, were determined not to let the Army advance towards downtown. An officer told us to let them recover the blocked tank. We didn’t want it and then they started shooting. Some shots went in the air, but others hit the people; I saw a man with a wounded leg. He started shouting at the soldiers: “Cowards! Communists! You are shooting your brothers and parents!” The crowd dispersed and the soldiers went ahead on Girocului Road. I ran among the apartment buildings. On Girocului Road there was a barricade of trolley-buses. The tanks went to the barricade and pushed the tanks away. All this time volleys of shots were heard. The blocked tank was recovered. When there was shooting, we hid among the buildings. As soon as the atmosphere calmed a little, we returned in the street. After a while, we stayed in the street even when there were shots, as most of them were in the air. However, some people were hit. I saw a wounded man near the confectionery. An ambulance came to take him, but the soldiers didn’t want to let it go through.*

*When the shots stopped for a while, we approached the soldiers and we discussed with their commander. We asked him why they were shooting at us, what we were guilty of. A friend, Dumitru Vlaic (who was shot later), unbuttoned his shirt and told the officer: Shoot me if I am guilty of anything! The officer told us to calm down and go home, because nothing would happen.*

*We made a fire in the middle of the street. We were dancing and singing ‘Awaken ye Romanians’<sup>13</sup>. The officer we had spoken to told us that his orders were to shoot and told us to go home. We refused. Then a shot was heard in the air, followed by shooting in the crowd. However, most of the soldiers were shooting in the air. I hid behind a pillar. The shootings were intense. I wanted to run from behind the pillar, to hide behind a building. Then I was shot. I started to cry: ‘My children! My children!’ An old man saw me and told the others to take care of me. The soldiers were advancing and if they had found me, they would probably have killed me. Two people dragged me inside a building, where I was given the first aid. I told them not to send me in the county hospital, as there were rumours that they killed the wounded there. Somebody from that building took me to the Orthopaedics Hospital by car. It was full of wounded people, and the smell of blood made me vomit”<sup>14</sup>.*

In December 17<sup>th</sup> 62 people were killed<sup>15</sup> and hundreds wounded. Of those who died, 11 were killed in

<sup>13</sup> *Awaken, Ye Romanians!* is a patriotic Romanian song that became Romania’s national anthem after the Revolution.

<sup>14</sup> See “*Revolutia din Timisoara asa cum a fost*” (*The Revolution of Timisoara As It Was*) p. 27-28.

<sup>15</sup> Including two people officially considered missing, but excluding one person whose cause of death is unsure: he was either shot during the revolution or killed in a car accident.

Girocului Road, 16 in the centre (near the Cathedral or the Opera House), 6 in Lipovei Road, 2 near Liberty Square, 2 in 700 Square, 5 near the Decebal Bridge, 2 in Aradului Road and the rest in other parts of the town.

Monday December 18<sup>th</sup> was the first working day after the events. In the factories the communist bosses warned the workers to avoid going in large groups on the streets.

However, in the downtown area the people gathered again.

*Avram Gliguta remembers: "We climbed the steps of the Cathedral. I said: 'Let's get some candles!' The people rushed to buy candles. I myself took three candles, but I gave two to others . After that I descended the steps. On the sidewalk in front of the Cathedral and near the hedge, there were puddles of coagulated blood. When I saw them I headed towards the soldiers and I asked: 'What is this? Are you the firing squad? Go home!' They didn't answer. I climbed the steps again. Almost everybody lit his or her candle. We started to shout towards the soldiers: 'You are our brothers and children! Ceausescu down!' They let us shout what we wanted for about half an hour. When we shouted 'Soldiers, join us', those from the armoured vehicles hid inside and drove them towards the tram stop, in order*

*to spread the crowd from that part. When the vehicles passed in front of us, the policemen who were posted between 'Timis' cinema house and 'Expres' fast food shot a warning fire. We rushed into the Cathedral. The Cathedral has a double gate, but because of the crush one gate was closed. We crouched, trying to slink inside. A man (later I learnt that his name was Sorin Leia) and I rose our heads to see what was happening, when a volley of shots started. Sorin Leia was hit right in his forehead. The bullet that exited from his head touched my neck on the right side. I felt something like a burning, I let my head down and I slunk inside. Some young people saw that Leia was shot and dragged him inside the Cathedral. Although shot in the forehead, Leia didn't lose much blood, and he was still breathing. When his head touched the cement a puddle of blood appeared below it suddenly. We were talking about buying a candle, so that he would die in a Christian way. A tall priest approached us and asked: 'What has happened to him, is he dead?'. Yes, we said. On hearing us talking about a candle, he said: 'He doesn't need anything anymore!'.*

*Another priest, older than the first one, showed the demonstrators the exit from the back of the church that led to the park, but I didn't pay attention to him. When things had calmed down a little, I left by the front door and near the wall I headed towards the tram station. I could still hear shots. I stopped on the*

*grass and I threw myself on my belly. On my clothes I had pieces of brain and stains of blood from Sorin Leia. I tried to clean myself with grass and leaves. Near the fast food stood the person who had shot Sorin Leia and me (I had managed to see his face) and a police officer who were shooting at the people to scatter them”<sup>16</sup>.*

Five people were killed in December 18<sup>th</sup> (2 in Girocului Road and 3 at the Cathedral). In December 19<sup>th</sup> two other people were killed.

The strategy of the communist regime was to claim that nothing was happening in Timisoara. In December 18<sup>th</sup>, president Ceausescu left the country for a previously scheduled visit to Iran. He wanted to prove the entire world that all the rumours about the events in Timisoara were false, that nothing special was going on to justify the cancellation of his visit to Iran. The newspapers did not mention anything about Timisoara. The destruction of any evidence about the events became the top priority. The broken windows were replaced. Quick repairs were done at the Communist County headquarters. The corpses of the killed revolutionaries were a very annoying evidence. Those should also be destroyed!

---

<sup>16</sup> See “*Revolutia din Timisoara asa cum a fost*, page 32-33.

The main hospital in Timisoara (The County Hospital) was surrounded by policemen. They did not allow the civilians to seek for their relatives who had been wounded or killed during the previous manifestations. In the night of December 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> a group of policemen, with the help of the hospital manager (who claimed that he had been forced to help them), stole 40 corpses that were taken to the crematorium in Bucharest and burnt. The ashes were thrown away in a canal. Also, the documents with the names of the wounded and the dead were stolen from the hospital. The plan was to claim afterwards that the missing people had left the country<sup>17</sup>.

In December 19<sup>th</sup>, at ELBA factory, the employees stopped working. They demanded the release of the arrested. The first secretary of the County Communist Party, Radu Balan, and the army general Stefan Guse, tried to convince them to go back to their work, but they failed. When a woman was shot near ELBA, the workers became even more resolute.

December 20<sup>th</sup> is the day when in all Timisoara's factories the workers went on strike. A big crowd gathered in front of the Communist Party headquarters. The prime

---

<sup>17</sup> The opinion of the chief military prosecutor of Timis County, expressed after the revolution in an interview published in "Expres" magazine in April 13<sup>th</sup> 1990.



December 20<sup>th</sup>: A big crowd gathered in Timisoara's center. People are looking at the Opera House balcony, from where the members of the Revolutionary Committee were delivering speeches

minister, Constantin Dascalescu, arrived in Timisoara to discuss with the demonstrators. A group was formed from the crowd, in order to negotiate with the authorities. The first successful step of the revolution was made: the prime minister agreed to free the prisoners. Only few of them, those whom the authorities considered leaders, were still kept in custody.

Columns of workers left the factories and went towards the city centre. There were hundreds of thousands of demonstrators. The military units were not able to stop them.

*Nicolae Badilescu relates: "On Savinesti Street there was a row of soldiers and near the wall of the city hall stood frontier guards, young boys, almost children. I went near them and tried to open a dialogue with them: 'Boys, children, what are you doing here? I am sure that you haven't eaten for a long time. The rascal, he is keeping you hungry, asking you to point the guns against us, isn't he? What we are doing is for everybody, including you'. I gave money to one of them and told him: 'Buy some biscuits, it is not worth to starve for that crazy man in Bucharest'.*

*My gesture was successful, other demonstrators did the same. The frontier guards didn't cause us any problems.*

*On seeing the armoured vehicles, I thought that it would be great for the spirit of the crowd to enter the*



*Opera Square on one of them. I climbed on one, starting to talk with the officers. My first question was: 'How many bullets do you have?' 'Three thousand'. 'OK. We are about 300,000. So I believe the best option is for you to come with us in the Opera Square'. We arrived in the Opera Square with the vehicle of sergeant Martin”<sup>18</sup>.*

While the crowd was gathering in the Opera Square (there was another crowd at the Communist Party headquarters), the Romanian Democratic Front was being organised inside the Opera House; it was an organisation trying to lead the revolutionary movement. The army units were withdrawn from the city. Anyway, the authorities could no longer count on their submission.

Around 6 o'clock in the evening the revolutionary movement started in a second Romanian town - Lugoj (situated near Timisoara).

President Ceausescu returned from his trip to Iran and, in the evening of December 20<sup>th</sup>, he delivered a speech broadcast by the national radio and television stations. That speech was the first official recognition of the fact that some events against the policy of the Party were happening in Timisoara.

---

<sup>18</sup> See “*Lumea buna a balconului*” (*The High Society of the Balcony*) by Titus Suci, Helicon Publishing House, Timisoara 1995, p. 75-76.

*In his speech, president Ceausescu said: "In the days of December 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, under the pretext of stopping the application of a legal court decision, several groups of hooligans organised some manifestations and incidents; they assaulted state institutions, destroyed and robbed many offices, stores, public buildings, and in December 17<sup>th</sup> they intensified their activities against the Party and state institutions, including military units (...)*

*The people in Timisoara knew and witnessed those fascist-type destructions. (...) As the actions of those terrorist, antinational groups continued, the military units – according to the Constitution and the laws of the country - were obliged to defend themselves, to defend the order and the goods of the entire city, in fact to defend the order of the entire country.(...)*

*From the data available we can declare with certitude that those terrorist actions were organised and unleashed in close relation with the reactionary, imperialist, irredentist, chauvinistic forces and the intelligence agencies from foreign countries.*

*The purpose of those antinational actions was to cause disorder to destabilise the political and economic situation, to create the conditions for the territorial dismantling of Romania, the destruction of the independence and sovereignty of our socialist country.*

*Not accidentally, the radio stations from Buda-*

*pest and from other countries started a shameless campaign of lies against our country even during those antinational and terrorist actions.*

*Their purpose (...) is to destroy our independence, our integrity, to stop the socialist development of Romania, to bring Romania back under foreign domination. (...)*

*It is obvious that this campaign against Romania is part of a larger plan against the independence and sovereignty of nations - those nations that don't want foreign domination and are ready to defend their independence, their right for a free life at any price, including with the weapons in hands. (...)*

*It is the duty of all the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Romania to act with the entire force against those who, in the service of different foreign interests, of espionage agencies, of imperialist forces, betray their country for a handful of dollars or other currencies. (...)*

*Nothing should stop out resolute action to serve the people, the socialism, the bright future of our country, of our nation”.*

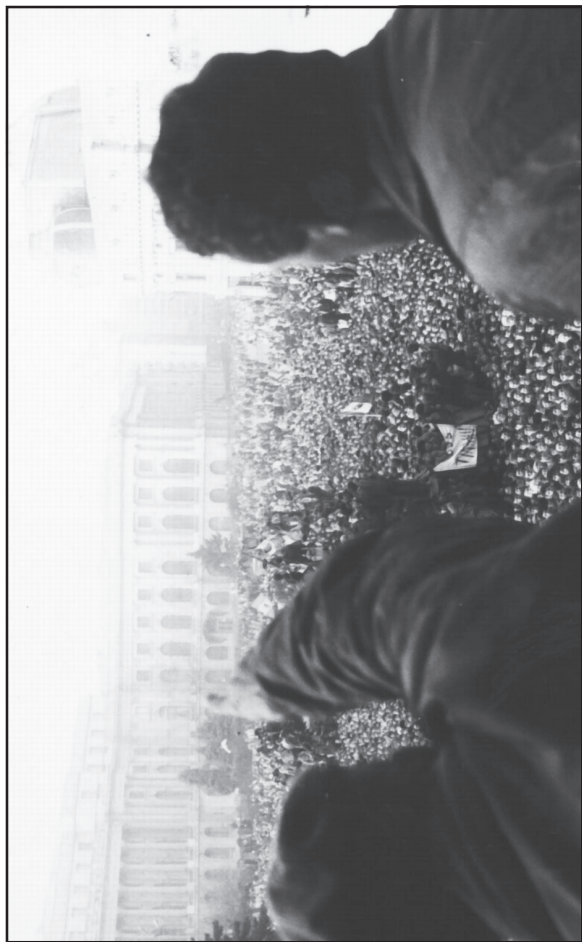
The Romanians learnt about the events in Timisoara from the Western radio stations. However, the confirmation of those events by president Ceausescu was an important moment. Now, “What happened in

Timisoara?” was a subject that can be discussed openly. And the discussions did not always follow the line that the authorities expected.

In December 21<sup>st</sup> the effect of Ceausescu’s speech was visible. The revolutionary movement boomed in many cities: Arad, Buzias, Sibiu, Cugir, Targu Mures, Caransebes, Resita, Bucharest, Brasov, Ghimbav, Fagaras, Cluj, Cismadie, Nadrag, Alba Iulia. In some of them (Bucharest, Cluj, Sibiu, Cugir, Caransebes, Targu Mures) fire was opened against the demonstrators. Many were killed, but not enough to stop the revolution. In Cugir, the revolutionaries killed some police officers.

In Bucharest, president Ceausescu organised a large meeting, in order to show the support that he had from the Romanian people. Hundreds of thousands of workers were taken from the factories and sent to the meeting. They were carrying portraits of president Ceausescu and his wife, Elena Ceausescu, and placards with slogans like “We blame the traitors of the country!”, “The chauvinist and irredentist manifestations of foreign circles should stop!”, “Romania has chosen: Socialism, Peace, Progress”. The meeting was broadcast on TV.

Nicolae Ceausescu began his speech, but suddenly a rumour was heard in the crowd. Some participants started shouting slogans against the dictatorship. The TV broad-



Bucharest, December 22<sup>nd</sup>: The revolutionaries conquered  
the headquarters of the Communist Party

cast was stopped. The president was stunned; for the first time he was unable to control the crowd. The participants panicked, the events were a surprise for them. They scattered but some of them regrouped in University Square. It was the beginning of the anticommunist demonstration in Bucharest.

In the evening of December 21<sup>st</sup>, the police and army units were sent against the freedom fighters in University Square. 41 people were killed in Bucharest that evening and night. But the next morning, columns of workers left the factories of Bucharest and went towards the headquarters of the Communist Party. There were hundreds of thousands people, nobody could stop them. On seeing the crowd, President Ceausescu escaped. A helicopter took him and his wife from the roof of the Communist Party headquarters, while the demonstrators were conquering the building. Soon, he would be captured and detained in the garrison of Targoviste.

## **The National Salvation Front**

After Ceausescu's escape, Romania was characterised by lack of leadership and a general status of disorder. A group of the former communist elite took advantage of the situation. They called themselves the National Salvation Front (NSF) and, with the help of state television, they presented themselves as the authors of the revolution.

The generals who were involved in the reprisal of the revolution joined the National Salvation Front and made a deal with those communists, in order to escape punishment for the crimes that they had committed in the first days of the revolution.

In the evening of December 22<sup>nd</sup> new fightings started. The official statement of NSF was that “terrorists” – troops loyal to Ceausescu - were trying to bring him back in power. During these fightings 942 persons died – almost six times more than in Ceausescu's attempt to put the revolution down.

In December 25<sup>th</sup> Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife were subjected to trial. They were accused of “killing of 60,000 people” and “stealing billions of dollars from the country”. They were sentenced to death and executed the same day.

In the following 13 years no proof was found that those troops loyal to Ceausescu had ever existed. No such

loyalist was found, either dead or alive. The NSF freed those who had been arrested as loyalists initially. The accusations during the Ceausescu trial proved to be inventions. It was true that Ceausescu had tried to put down the revolution, and he was clearly responsible for the 162 people killed before December 22<sup>nd</sup>. However, there was no proof that he organised a resistance after his escape from the Communist Party headquarters, and the number of 60,000 people killed was a pure invention.

In my opinion, the NSF leadership staged all the fightings that occurred after Ceausescu's arrest. Thus they were able to present themselves as heroes of the revolution who were endangering their lives in the fight against Ceausescu's loyalists.

However, some people sensed that something was wrong with the NSF. A lot of people were suspicious about the new rulers, but when there were fightings, you had to stop criticism, as the country was in danger.

As soon as the fighting against the presumed loyalists had stopped, the demonstrations against the NSF began. Questions about who the terrorists were and who was guilty of killing people during revolution were raised. However, most Romanians did not participate in the revolution directly, they only watched it on TV. As the TV was under NSF control, they believed the NSF version of the history of revolution and that the main merit for it belonged to the NSF leaders.



After taking power, the NSF behaved like Santa Claus. Any social category that wanted a pay rise received it, irrespective of the economic consequences.

As a result, the NSF gained popularity. Most people were very happy with their increased salaries and did not want to ask the new authorities about their role in the revolution. At the elections held in May 1990, president Iliescu won 85%, and the NSF 66% of the votes. The workers, especially the miners from Southern Transylvania, supported the NSF fanatically, helping the authorities to crush the demonstrations organised by the opposition.

However, the “Santa Claus” economic policy had bad secondary effects. Inflation started in 1990 (after the elections) and many people saw their economic status worsening at a level below the one during Ceausescu’s time. Statistics show that even after 13 years from the revolution, many people, especially the older ones, earn less than in Ceausescu’s days.

In 1991, the NSF divided in two parties (the Democratic Social Party led by president Iliescu, and the Democratic Party led by prime minister Petre Roman). At the elections held in 1992 the fraction led by Ion Iliescu won. In 1996 the opposition won the elections (the National Peasant Party, the Liberal Party, the Democratic Union of the Hungarians and the Democratic Party of Petre Roman).

## **A Difficult Matter to Clarify**

An attempt to clarify the circumstances of the revolution was made in February 2000, when the Supreme Court sentenced two army generals who contributed to the reprisal of the revolution to 15 years of prison. Both had joined the NSF in December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1989 and were members of the first “revolutionary” government. They are general Victor Stanculescu, former minister of industry and minister of defence, and general Chitac, former minister of police.

Their trial brought criticism from both fractions of the former NSF (the Democratic Social Party of Mr. Iliescu, which was in opposition, and the Democratic Party of Petre Roman, which was in the government coalition). They claimed that the trial had been unfair and suggested amnesty for the officers who had been involved in the killings during the revolution. The political interest in hiding the truth and the responsibilities about the events of the revolution was very high.

The elections of November 2000 brought Mr. Iliescu back to power. He appointed a new General Prosecutor, Joita Tanase, who declared “extraordinary appeal” at the Supreme Court decision for generals Stanculescu and Chitac. The General Prosecutor has this right based on Romanian law. Dan Voinea, the prosecutor who initiated

the trial of Stanculescu and Chitac, received a lower-rank job.

The Supreme Court should try the Stanculescu-Chitac case again. As independence of justice in Romania is debatable and political pressure is very high in this case, the result of the trial is hard to predict.

In another case, president Iliescu issued a decree of pardon for three army officers who had been sentenced to prison for the killings in Timisoara. There is a kind of propaganda which claims that it is bad to discuss about the role of the Army in the reprisal of the revolution, as the Army is an important factor for the stability of the society, and it is not wise to reduce the trust that Romanian people has in its Army.

## **A Personal Experience**

In the evening of December 16<sup>th</sup> 1989 I left home to go to the disco at the Students House (I was a student at that time). In the tram I heard people talking about the large number of people gathered in Maria Square (near Tokes' house). I was familiar with the Tokes case and I heard that the day before there had been a crowd around his house. I became curious, so I got off in Maria Square. There were a lot of people there, all silent, some holding candles. I had the feeling that this gathering could be the occasion that we were looking for. The Romanians could not be the most stupid people in Eastern Europe!

A young man was speaking in front of Tokes' house. "We've been told that the fire-fighters will come against us. Those who don't want to remain can leave".

In a couple of minutes, Laszlo Tokes appeared at the window (I didn't know his face at that time). "I am safe", he said. "Down with the lies!" shouted the crowd.

Somebody said that the students were coming. This rumour encouraged the crowd. I cried as hard as I could: "Down with Ceausescu!" Other slogans were shouted. The crowd blocked the circulation of the trams.

A group of policemen appeared. On seeing them, the crowd (200-300 persons) had a moment of rout. It was not natural for 200-300 people to be afraid of 10 policemen, but that was the situation. Things had to return to normal.

The crowd shouted “cowards” at those who were retreating; “look how many we are and how many they are”. Near a store lay two boxes of empty milk bottles – the perfect things to throw at the policemen. I took some myself.

The panic ceased. Bottles were flowing towards the policemen. Some demonstrators tried to talk to them so they shouted at the crowd to stop throwing bottles. When they stopped, the crowd shouted at the policemen: “Join us!” The policemen were peaceful. They formed a line on Cipariu Street (where Tokes’ house was), but they allowed the passage between them. I tried to talk to one of them, so I asked him: “What are you looking for here?” “Hey kid, did you serve in the Army?”, he asked back.

The reference to the Army was not convincing enough for me. As a student, I had done my military service in Caransebes. There were two basic rules: bribery and connections. By the end of my service, the officers had lost their authority in front of us, the students. I remember one night when the commander of our company, being upset, ordered us: “Company, get out in the courtyard!” We didn’t go, as we were sleepy. The captain repeated the order several times but, seeing that nobody cared about it, he gave up.

During my military service I grew to believe that in the Romanian Army the suckers obeyed and the clever ones slackened as much as they could. Anyhow, the supreme commander (Ceausescu) was reported that everything in the Romanian Army was excellent.

*My personal conviction is that the lack of discipline in the Romanian Army, a characteristic of the last years during Ceausescu's regime, is one of the reasons for the failure of the reprisal of the revolution. Ceausescu tried to apply the Tien An Men model, but he was not able.*

I remember the events that happened in Brasov, a city in Southern Transylvania, in 1987. The workers started a revolt against the authorities, but it was put down quickly. This should not be repeated. I started shouting "Let's come again tomorrow!". I discovered a few people around me who understood me (one of them made up a new slogan that I liked: "This is the beginning!"), but my slogan was not as popular as I wanted.

The crowd shouted "Freedom!" and started singing "The Union Dance" (a 19<sup>th</sup> century patriotic song whose main idea is that all Romanians need to be united: "One man only is powerless/ In need and in pain / But two are stronger / And their enemy is weak"). A young man shouted: "Gheorghe Doja was killed in this square!<sup>19</sup> Ceausescu will die here too!"

---

<sup>19</sup> Gheorghe Doja was the leader of a peasant uprising in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. His army was defeated in Timisoara in 1514 and he was executed in the place called Maria Square today. It is said that his comrades were forced to eat pieces from his dead body after his execution.

The crowd increased. Some suggested going to the County Communist Party headquarters. It seemed that part of the demonstrators went in that direction.

Soon fire brigade trucks followed by soldiers with helmets and shields could be seen. The people were scattered from Tokes' house, but they regrouped near the bridge that connected Maria Square with the city centre. For a while nothing happened. The soldiers were in Maria Square. They kept quite a distance between them and the crowd. Some demonstrators were shouting slogans, but most of them stood as mere spectators.

The soldiers started to advance and hit their shields with sticks. The people panicked. The soldiers crossed the bridge, separating the crowd in two. Part of the demonstrators was on the street that was parallel with the Bega. My group (less than 100 people) stood at the end of the bridge, towards the centre.

I started to go from person to person, telling them that next day we must gather again in Maria Square at 5 o'clock in the evening. I wanted to inform as many people as possible. I made a way round in order to reach the demonstrators on the other side of the river. Then I left. I told each passer-by I met: "Let's meet in *Maria* at 5 p.m. tommorow". An old lady suggested that I should go the railway station, where there were a lot of people. I went there and announced the meeting. On leaving, I whispered my announcement to two groups that were standing in

front of the railway building. When I crossed the street I saw two policemen running after me. I started running myself, but two other policemen appeared in front of me. I was caught. I was taken to a building where I got hit for the first time. They searched me and found my student ID - shit, I had to tell them my real name. I thought that I would be expelled from the University.

A car took me to the headquarters of the County Police. There I was led to a kind of prison, where I was ordered to kneel down with my hands on my nape, near the other prisoners. A policeman was watching us and hitting those who did not take the correct position. At first I was near two girls. A policeman shouted at me: “Do you want to fuck them?”

One by one we were called to make short statements (name, place of birth, parents). I was asked how I had got arrested. “I was passing by the railway station when two policemen started running after me. I was scared, I ran, but they caught me”, I said. “Who caught you?”. “They did”, I answered, and was hit with the stick: “Don’t say “they”, you must call them the order maintaining bodies”.

I was taken to another cell. Some people had their heads bandaged, coagulated blood on their clothes or on their head. Near me, a man was moaning: “I can’t take it any more. They jumped on me with their feet. I think my ribs are broken”. He asked me to take him to a friend of



his, if we were released. A woman was crying hysterically. She told the policemen that she wasn't in control of herself, that she had spent some time in an asylum previously. Later a physician came and told her that she would be sent to a hospital. After a while the women were moved to a separate cell. A soldier on leave asked that his garrison should be announced about what had happened to him. An Army non-com was convinced that we would be freed by the next morning. He told us how he was going to beat one of the policemen he had met often at the Army House. By morning, instead of being freed, we saw new prisoners brought in. We were like sardines in a tin.

In the morning of December 17<sup>th</sup> we were led in the courtyard. A man was lying on the ground, motionless. An ambulance came to take him. The policemen gave us a speech. Four policemen, one frontier guard and two soldiers were killed, they told (false information, used by the regime in order to justify the repression). Of course, we were guilty for that. A truck took us to the prison on Popa Sapca Street. There they took all our valuable things and money. We were led to a room with 30 beds disposed on three levels, a table, two benches and a toilet.

I slept for a few hours, then we were led in a corridor. The students were separated from the other prisoners. Together with other students, I was taken to a bathroom. The general state of mind was very bad, everybody was

depressed. Some started to speak about how they had been arrested - only accidentally, they were returning from somewhere, they had no connections with the demonstrations. We were suspecting one another, you couldn't tell which of us was an informer. We joked about the microphones that might be in the bathroom - maybe the pegs were "Philips". We talked about the beating that was expecting us at the questioning.

After a few hours, we saw a helicopter through the windows. We heard the rumble of the crowd and shots. We made suppositions: are the bullets real or fake? Are the shots fired in the air or at the people? Some of us mentioned the chances that the demonstrations would spread in other cities as well, and thought of the comments that the foreign radio stations would make.

By evening we were fed for the first time. Two people entered the bathroom. One pointed to me and said: "Note him!", and then addressed me: "What were you doing last night with a stake in your hand?" During the battle in Maria Square, I had held a tree branch for a while. I must have been filmed, but I replied that I hadn't carried any stake. Then he asked my name, where I had been arrested, where I lived. When he found out my address, he realised we were neighbours. He left without further questioning.

For the night we went back to the room with 30 beds, where we slept two in a bed.

On Monday December 18<sup>th</sup> we started to know one other better, to talk about various topics (including politics). We made jokes. I suggested playing “the mime”. Of all the 60 people in the room, hardly a few showed any desire to play, but after the game started it would stir the attention of the entire room.

One by one we were called for interrogation. My turn came. There were two investigators, but only one talked to me. He advised me to recognise everything, as they would find out everything from me anyway.

In order to escape, I made up a story. I said that I had been returning from my cousin that lived in the suburbs. Not a very bright story. The distance from my cousin’s house to my place is too long to walk, but I couldn’t think of another way to explain my presence near the railway station. The interrogator did not believe me. He asked a lot of details: which way I had taken exactly, in what position was the bell at my cousin’s home? Why had I gone to the County Council? I hadn’t been there. He threatened that they would hang me upside down. I was hit with a rubber stick on my legs. In the end I wrote a statement and made it sound as I wanted. The interrogator told the guardian that was escorting me to keep me isolated.

Nevertheless, the guardian escorted me back to the old room. I told the others about the questioning. I thought that the secret police would check my cousin’s place. In

the cell there were two gypsy kids who couldn't read or write. I thought they might be freed before me and they were not collaborators of the secret police. I whispered my story in the ear of one of them and I asked him that if he escaped sooner than me, he should call my place and tell my folks about this story. But when I asked him to repeat what he had understood, it turned out he had understood nothing. I decided to tell my story to a person (Victor Burghelea) who showed signs from the beatings – he didn't look like a collaborator of the secret police.

In the morning of December 19<sup>th</sup>, I was isolated in a cell for half an hour. I could see the jail gate. Only a few meters separated me from freedom! I didn't have much time to think about it, because I was climbed up in a truck and sent back to the Police headquarters. There a young man interrogated me. He began with the psychological preparation. They don't want to beat me, why am I forcing them to do it? I repeated the story that involved my cousin. I was put on the floor face down and beaten on my soles, back and hands. I screamed as hard as I could. I simulated fainting. They threw water on me. A lieutenant colonel objected when he saw blood leaking from my mouth. The questioning started again. I was told that they had a report written by the two policemen that had arrested me, and who heard me telling people to come to Maria Square at 8 o'clock the next day. I noticed that they didn't know what I said precisely.

I began writing a statement about my family and relatives that I had abroad. Trying to gain time, I was writing as slowly as possible. I reached the point when my story involved my cousin - I could no longer deal with my interrogator. He ordered me to make genuflexions. I had two choices: beating with genuflexion or beating without genuflexion. I chose the last one. The interrogation went on. For tens of times I was asked about the same things: "I don't care what you said, I know it very well, I want to know why you said it", my interrogator insisted. He even suggested that Maria was a woman I wanted to visit. He applied the tactics to make me confess gradually. After a new round of beatings, I simulated fainting again. Somebody who entered the room simulated kicking my head. Instinctively, I moved to avoid his kick. "Send him to hell, he's got reflexes", he said. The interrogator handcuffed me tightly. My articulations were swelling, my hands were turning blue. The lieutenant colonel who had been there before said that the handcuffs should be removed. The interrogator was not hurrying. After a while, he loosened the handcuffs for 2-3 minutes, then tightened them again. In order to escape, I told them that while passing by the railway station, somebody from a group told me to come to Maria Square the next day. I wrote a statement. After a while the interrogator said that he had spoken on the phone with those who had seen me, and that I had been spotted near two groups of people.

I gave in psychologically. I thought: how much more beating do I have to endure? One or two days are bearable, but the questioning could go on for a month or even a year. If Ceausescu fell, there would be no reason to endure the beatings; if he resisted, I would try to solve this problem later. I admitted that I had persuaded the people to come to Maria Square the next day, but I thought that it wouldn't be wise to tell them that I had been there from the very beginning (at the time, I thought that the Revolution started only after my arrival at Laszlo Tokes' house. Afterwards I learnt that a group of demonstrators had left Maria Square before my arrival). I lied that I had arrived in Maria Square later. While I was writing another statement, a man in leather clothing said: "Ceausescu is too good with people like you. He should have had you shot from the very beginning. Don't you realise that we are still stronger? Anyone dare move, he'll turn into an angel".

It was already evening. I was taken to a cell. Here, talking with the other prisoners, I learnt that at the time I had pretended to be on 23 August Boulevard, that place was agitated. I told myself: though I admitted what they accused me of, they still knew I was still lying. If I lied again, who knows what they might think I was hiding?

On the morning of December 20<sup>th</sup> two new interrogators questioned me. Again the start was the psychological preparation. One of them told me that he was notorious in all Romanian prisons. He urged me to

admit everything, there was no way I could resist. I told them the truth, but that was not good. They wanted to know who organised everything. What discussions about Laszlo Tokes took place at University? Who did I talk about the Radio Free Europe news with? What people did I recognise at the demonstrations?

I was beaten again. They hit my soles, but I had my shoes on. I screamed as hard as I could, to make the interrogator feel he fulfilled his duty. He said: "Do you think I don't know how it feels with your shoes on?" He took off my shoes and kept hitting me. Indeed, the beating was worse. The interrogation went on like this for a few hours. I remembered that in December 17<sup>th</sup> I was invited to a friend's birthday. I told them that they could check it. I wrote another statement only about the fact that I used to listen to Radio Free Europe. While writing it, I heard slogans through the windows: "The people are with you!" and "Freedom!"

I was taken back to the cell. A young policeman ordered the prisoners to kneel, but I and few others who were considered intellectuals were excepted from this order.

After a while I received a uniform and was moved to another cell. This time my companions were six political prisoners of the revolution and a thief. I thought he might be an informer, though he pronounced himself against Ceausescu.

We talked about the way we they were questioning us. One of the prisoners, “the doctor” (dentist Teodor Taut) had his hands swollen from the beatings. He had been imprisoned in the past for abortions (abortions were illegal during Ceausescu’s era) and it seemed he also knew the thief. He was convinced that those who beat him would have to pay for it. Another prisoner (Doru Berejovschi) was shot in the hand, but he didn’t want the interrogators know. He told us that the interrogators had threatened to kill him with a bren gun, and after that they would pretend that he had attacked them.

In the evening we talked about poetry. The doctor recited the last part of “We want land”<sup>20</sup>: “Beg God to protect you / If we want blood, not land / Christ if you are, you will not escape / Not even in your graves”. I chose “Iov’s Prayer” by Paunescu. The doctor said he and Paunescu were friends. The thief surprised us with how much he had read.

In December 21<sup>st</sup> we were not disturbed until the evening. Through the window we could hear the rumble of the crowd, but we couldn’t understand what they were shouting. The thief said that he was ordered to keep the

---

<sup>20</sup> “We want land!”, a poem by George Cosbuc, a classic Romanian poet at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the poem was written after the peasant uprising in 1907, when thousands of peasants were killed.



window closed (he had been in the cell before us). He acted as the boss of the cell who would be hold responsible if orders were not obeyed. I opened the window for short periods, but the others (especially the thief) objected.

We made suppositions about the amplitude of the demonstrations and their possible expansion in other cities. Somebody said that the previous Monday (December 18<sup>th</sup>) he had heard that protests also started in Arad (a city 60 km North from Timisoara) and that 1,000 people were dead. I thought it incredible. The thief spoke about his life. I talked with him about life in prison.

In the evening we were taken to investigation again. Fearfully I thought that I would be beaten again. I remember that Tuesday, when I they read me the supposed report of those who had arrested me, I was described as wearing glasses. I decided not to wear glasses during the inquiry. They asked me who I had seen at the demonstrations and what I knew about my professors at the University – was any of them talking too much during the courses? Of course, I said I didn't know anything. I could hear the crowd. The investigator said: "In 1961-62, they went in the streets with pitchforks and hatchets, but we defeated them".

The following night I was questioned again. I repeated my previous statements. I asked the investigator what his position was. A prosecutor, he answered.

No more violence. However, I was concerned with the fact that the rumble of the crowd was gone.

In the afternoon of December 22<sup>nd</sup> I heard “Victory!” through the windows. After that we were removed from our cell and given our civilian clothes back. I asked a senior sergeant if we would be freed. He said yes. We were climbed up in a van, together with prisoners from other cells. I thought that we would be sent to the prison on Popa Sapca Street, in order to recover our possessions taken from us a couple of days before. Through a small window between our compartment and the driver’s cabin I could see the road. Obviously we were not taken to the prison. We saw people with flags. The driver’s companion made friendly gestures towards the people on the street. One of us imitated him, though he could not have been seen from outside. He was immediately admonished: “What is it, are you free?” I suggested hitting the walls of the van. The prisoners near the door managed to open it. We jumped as the truck was still moving. I discovered I was in Fratelia district. I was afraid that the van would return to pick me again. I entered a courtyard in order to lose my trace. In the house, two old women were listening to a radio programme in Hungarian. I asked them what had happened to Ceausescu. They told me that he was in China. I told them that I had escaped from the Police and I asked them what had happened. They said that somebody appeared on the television. I didn’t quite understand what they meant. I thought that the Police

could seek me at home, it would be better to stay hidden at those old women. I asked them to change to Radio Bucharest. I listened to the programme announcing that the revolutionaries took the power and tears came into my eyes. In half an hour I went home.

In December 23<sup>rd</sup> I stayed home, listening to the television and recovering myself after the beating during my incarceration. The television reported that “terrorists” loyal to Ceausescu were attacking the revolutionary power.

In December 24<sup>th</sup> an announcement was made that the students should gather at the Technical University, where they should organise themselves in order to defend the revolution.

I was confused about those “terrorists” that were endangering the revolution. Ceausescu having loyalists so fanatic that they were ready to risk their lives for him was beyond my imagination. But now, when the country was in danger, there was no time for questions.

I went to the University. There we were split in groups, each having the mission to defend a certain building against the “terrorists”. My group was defending a student hostel. If the “terrorists” took the hostel, they would get closer to their objective: bring Nicolae Ceausescu back in power!

We started by checking the building. I was carrying a crowbar. I felt seven lives burning in my chest. If I found

a stranger hiding in the building, first I would strike him and only then I would ask him what he was looking for in that place.

In the evening we were ordered to turn off the lights. We should avoid being shot by the “terrorists” who would be able to see us through the windows if the lights were on. For me this order sounded a little strange. It is in the dark that the terrorist can act easier. It would be better to turn all the lights on and light up the entire area. But an order was an order, so we stayed in the dark.

We decided to take three-hour shifts. Two remained to watch the stair house, the other watched television or rested. I was on duty together with my colleague Tudor Fluieras, when somebody knocked at the door. We went down and opened it. It was one of the people defending the next building. He told us that a terrorist was sending light signals from our building. Why send signals? Nobody asked it, as it was obvious: everybody heard about the helicopters that parachuted “terrorists”. From what our visitor explained, we understood that the terrorist could be hidden in one of the three rooms near the place where we were. The rooms were locked. It was risky to force the doors, the terrorist could be armed. We asked the Army to send us some soldiers (they never came).

While waiting for help, we blocked the doors with chairs. If the terrorist tried to come out, the chairs would fall and make noise.

Morning came. We turned on the light in the stair house. We should break the doors and catch the terrorist. The man from the neighbouring building knocked again. The light was on where the terrorist was hiding, he said. We turned it on, I said. In the end, I understood the confusion: every time somebody was lighting his cigarette, the flame was taken for a light signal. Whenever the watch shifts were changing, the new shift was coming with a lantern - another light signal.

After the revolution I submitted a complaint concerning what had happened to me during the Revolution. But because in 1990 the National Salvation Front issued a decree of amnesty that also included the crime of abusive behaviour, my complaint was never solved.

## **Events That Took Place in the Communist Countries in 1989**

**January 11th:** The Hungarian Parliament accepted the idea of free elections and the existence of non-communist political parties.

**January 15th:** In Prague, the police scattered a meeting held in honour of Jan Palach, the student who committed suicide in 1968 as a protest against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

**February 6th - April 5th:** In Poland, communist authorities held debates with representatives of the non-communist movement “Solidarity”.

**February 15th:** The Soviet Army withdrew from Afghanistan completely.

**March 17th:** Hungary signed the UN Convention concerning the refugees. Consequently, the political refugees from communist countries were not extradited any longer. This led to a massive exodus of East-Germans who wanted to go to West Germany, which destabilised Honecker’s East Germany regime. Also the number of Romanians fleeing to Hungary increased.

**March 28th:** In Kosovo (Yugoslavia) confrontations between ethnic Albanians and the police took place.

**April 9th:** At Tbilisi, people claimed the independence of the Georgian Soviet Republic. In the clashes with the police some people were killed.

**May 8th:** Janos Kadar was replaced as chief of Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (the name of the Communist Party in Hungary).

**May 28th:** Radio Budapest spoke about Laszlo Tokes for the first time, in connection with the amateur theatre troupe "Thalia". Afterwards, Tokes would always be in the attention of the Hungarian mass media.

**June 4th:** The Chinese authorities crushed the demonstration in Tian An Men Square.

**June 4th:** The non-communist party "Solidarity" won the elections in Poland.

**June 16th:** The leader of the Hungarian Revolution from 1956 was buried with official honours in Hungary.

**July 7-8th:** At the conference of the Warsaw Pact countries held in Bucharest, Gorbachev pronounced himself against the use of force and threatening with force in the relations between countries.

**July 24th:** The first televised interview of Laszlo Tokes, on TV Budapest.

**August 19th:** Tadeusz Mazowieczky, a member of "Solidarity", became the prime minister of Poland.

**August 21st:** Big demonstration in Czechoslovakia to commemorate the 1968 military Soviet invasion.

**August 27th:** Big demonstration in the Soviet Republic of Moldavia. 300,000 people demanded that Romanian become the official language of the Republic.

**August 31st:** Romanian became the official language in the Soviet Republic of Moldavia.

**September:** Prodemocratic demonstrations began in Bulgaria.

**September 23rd and 25th:** Prodemocratic demonstrations started in East Germany (Berlin and Leipzig).

**October 7th:** The Soviet leader Gorbachev visited East Germany.

**October 9th:** East German leader, Erich Honecker, asked for the stopping of demonstrations by force, but Egon Krenz opposed such a plan.

**October 18th:** Egon Krenz replaced Erich Honecker at the leadership of East Germany.

**November 9th:** The Berlin Wall was destroyed.

**November 7th and 10th:** At Kishinev (Soviet Republic of Moldavia) violent clashes between the demonstrators and the police took place.

**November 10th:** In Bulgaria, Petar Mladenov replaced Todor Zhivkov.

**November 16th:** In the Soviet Republic of Moldavia, Petru Lucinschi replaced Simion Grosu as leader of the communist party.

**November 17th:** Tens of thousands of demonstrators in Prague.

**November 23rd:** A strike attempt at the Mechanical Factory in Timisoara failed.



**November 24th:** Ceausescu was re-elected as the leader of the Romanian Communist Party.

**December 2nd and 3rd:** Michael Gorbachev and George Bush met at Malta.

**December 3rd:** The entire communist leadership of East Germany resigned under the pressure of the demonstrators. A transition regime that would prepare free elections was formed.

**December 4th:** In Moscow, communist leaders from all the countries that were part of the Warsaw Treaty held a meeting. An official statement blaming the 1968 intervention in Czechoslovakia was issued.

**December 10th:** A government of a non-communist majority was formed in Czechoslovakia.

**December 14th:** In Iasi (Eastern Romania) the attempt to start a demonstration against Ceausescu's regime failed.

**December 15th:** A crowd gathered near Laszlo Tokes' house, supporting him against the court decision that ordered his eviction.

**December 16th:** The demonstration that began near Tokes' house spread in the entire city of Timisoara. Many people were arrested.

**December 17th:** In Timisoara, fire was opened against people who demonstrated against Ceausescu. Dozens were killed, hundreds wounded.

**December 20th:** Many of Timisoara's factories were on strike. Demonstrations against Ceausescu also started in Lugoj (a city 50 km from Timisoara).

**December 21st:** In many Romanian cities (Arad, Buzias, Sibiu, Cugir, Targu Mures, Caransebes, Resita, Brasov, Ghimbav, Fagaras, Cluj, Cismadie, Alba Iulia) including the capital Bucharest people were protesting against Ceausescu.

**December 22nd:** The National Salvation Front took the power in Romania. New fightings started in the evening.

## Contents

Short Romanian History .....	3
Romania during Ceausescu's Dictatorship .....	9
The Development of the Laszlo Tokes Case .....	19
The Development of the Revolution .....	25
The National Salvation Front .....	51
A Difficult Matter to Clarify .....	54
A Personal Experience .....	56
Events That Took Place in the Communist Countries in 1989.....	74

Printed in Romania by  
ARTPRESS PUBLISHING HOUSE  
Str. Al. Vaida Voievod FN  
Tel./fax: +40 256 293 975, +40 256 293 809  
E-mail: [artpress@artpress.com.ro](mailto:artpress@artpress.com.ro)