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General Stefan Gusa, the Soviets, and the Ghost of Pavel Corut in the Indictment of the Revolution File

Among the countries of former Warsaw Pact “Eastern Europe,”¹ legacy nationalism from the late communist era has probably nowhere been more confused or complicated than in Romania. Both the late personalist communist regimes of Todor Zhivkov in Bulgaria and Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania were strongly nationalist, particularly against the principal ethnic minorities within their borders (Turks and Hungarians respectively); but whereas Bulgarian regime nationalism was pro-Soviet, Romanian regime nationalism was adversarial towards the Soviet Union.² The nationalism of Erich Honecker’s regime in the DDR was, similarly to that of Bulgaria, also pro-Soviet. In Poland and Hungary, the late communist regimes gradually attempted to defuse strong anti-Soviet nationalism in their societies. However, they were careful to ensure that regime nationalism was low-key and still mildly pro-Soviet, or at least compatible with Soviet dominance in the Warsaw Pact, precisely because they wanted to engage in controlled liberalization. In other words, late communist regimes in Warsaw Pact Eastern Europe displayed different combinations of domestically-directed nationalism (from more to less majoritarian/ethnocentric) and

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- 1 I use the term “Eastern Europe” here, or at least its Cold War construct, to include the countries that during the roughly 40-50 year period between the close of World War II and the late 1980s-early 1990s were *de facto* ruled by communist regimes (thus the Warsaw Pact Six—the DDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria—plus Yugoslavia and Albania). The region thus formerly known as “communist Eastern Europe” now goes by many different names and divisions, depending upon the location and countries included.
- 2 Hereafter, I shall use the term “anti-Soviet” for short, as it was *de facto* anti-Soviet, even though the fiction of bloc ideological unity and the reality of Soviet hegemony encouraged its expression in more euphemistic and subtle forms. It is important to note that after the early 1970s Ceausescu’s anti-Soviet positions were likely not interpreted by the Soviets as a major threat, liable to spread and infect the rest of the region—especially not during the Gorbachev era, when Ceausescu’s hardline policies were seen as relics of the past and did not inspire emulation. Nor were Ceausescu’s anti-Soviet positions anti-communist: he remained a hardline true believer in communism to the end. Some of the anti-Sovietism of former members of the Ceausescu regime, including the former Securitate, seems to be more tactical and retroactive. Pertinent to this question are the memories of those who participated in the ultimately scuttled attempt to demonstrate in Iasi on 14 December 1989. Ioana Diaconescu, Cassian Maria Spiridon, *REVOLUȚIA ASCUNSĂ IAȘI 14 DECEMBRIE 1989 PREMISE ȘI DECLANȘARE (The Hidden Revolution. Iasi December 14 1989. Premises and triggering)*, (Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2019), p. 525: “During the interrogation did they [the Securitate] use the word KGB or CIA? Vasile Vicol: ‘No, absolutely not. They told us that we had been poisoned by the ‘kikes’ from Radio Free Europe, that we were in the service of a foreign power, that we were slaves of the party, that the party had made me an engineer out of a peasant, that they did say. However, about the KGB, no. If it has any importance, Prutianu told me that when we were to demonstrate, to not use words such as perestroika, glasnost, because it had to be ours, Romanian.’”

externally-directed nationalism (from more to less deferential to Soviet primacy).³

During the early post-communist era, especially in the early and mid-1990s, in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria, anti-Soviet (1990-1991) and anti-post Soviet/anti-Russian (1992-) nationalism tended to be centered in the anti-(former) communist opposition. However, in Romania, because of the syncretic character of Ceausescu's "national communist" ideology—as numerous scholars have previously identified inside and outside of Romania⁴—anti-Soviet/anti-post Soviet/anti-Russian nationalism was to be found not only in the anti-communist opposition, but also among the elements of the rump national communist state. True, the anti-communist opposition to the regime of Ion Iliescu, at home and abroad, strove to differentiate its "liberal" or "civic," more inclusive domestic nationalism towards minorities, from the antagonistic, exclusionary domestic nationalism of the former Ceausists. Nevertheless, the two groups overlapped in their adversarial nationalism toward the former Soviet Union/Russia.

As I shall show in this article, the toxic legacy of the Ceausescu regime's appropriation, exploitation, and use of anti-Soviet/anti-Russian nationalism⁵ —among otherwise often ideologically diametrically-opposed political, social, and cultural orientations—is critical for understanding how historical research on and judicial investigations of the Ceausescu and initial post-Ceausescu eras, especially the Romanian Revolution of December 1989, have been packaged, marketed, received, and circulated in post-communist Romania. We can illustrate this point by looking at the claims made in the Indictment in the Revolution File regarding Army General Stefan Gusa and his alleged forestalling of direct Soviet intervention in Romania in December 1989, and the concomitant alleged non-existence of counterrevolutionary forces; and the reactions of Romanian media and intellectuals to the Indictment's claims.

1. The Indictment of the Revolution File on General Stefan Gusa

December 2024 marks the 35th anniversary of the Romanian Revolution of December

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- 3 This dichotomy between the ethnic, internally-focused character of nationalism and that of its external focus is important, can be illustrated, and easily applies beyond the communist era. Clearly, the character and orientation of nationalism in today's Central Europe have evolved over time, none more so than in the Hungarian Civic Alliance (Fidesz) Party of Viktor Orban in Hungary. Beginning from approximately 1993-1995, Fidesz's nationalism became less liberal and civic and far more antagonistic and exclusionary over time. However, it was only after 2009, and particularly after Fidesz's return to power in 2010, that Fidesz' orientation began to view Russia in a positive light. It is by now common to contrast the metamorphosis of Viktor Orban from anti-Soviet zealot to a friend of Putin's Russia, but one can still remain stunned to re-read today how the young Orban called for the removal of Russian (he used the Hungarian word for Russian, not Soviet) troops four times in his famous address in Heroes Square on 16 June 1989.
- 4 Scholars outside of Romania who have written of the protochronist and national communist dimensions of Ceausescu's regime include Katherine Verdery, Vladimir Tismaneanu, Dennis Deletant, and Michael Shafir, among others. See in particular Katherine Verdery's *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania* (University of California Press, 1991).
- 5 Ken Jowitt in *New World Disorder* (University of California Press, 1992) invoked the metaphor of "half-life" to describe the impact of "Leninist legacies" after communism. The term is useful in that it describes decomposition over time because some of the ideological and behavioral legacies of communist political culture fade away (for example, see the above in fn. 3 with regard to the anti-Russian orientation of Viktor Orban and Fidesz.).

1989, while 28 March 2024 marked 30 years since the death of the controversial General Stefan Gusa, the Chief of the General Staff of the Romanian Armed Forces in December 1989.⁶ One of the more interesting and telling aspects of the Indictment of the Revolution File—authored by his own account by retired Military Prosecutor General Catalin Ranco Pitu—is the treatment of Gusa and his relationship with Ion Iliescu and the other once senior communist officials who took power in the wake of the flight of the Ceausescus from the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) Central Committee (CC) building.⁷ The Indictment tells us that, 1) at the time, Gusa was the only official in the Romanian state constitutionally empowered to request the entry of foreign troops into Romania; 2) Iliescu and his acolytes requested the intervention of Soviet troops to prop up their hold on power; 3) it was Gusa’s refusal to allow the entry of those troops that prevented a Soviet (re-) invasion and (re-) occupation of Romania;⁸ and 4) Gusa was demoted and marginalized after December 1989 precisely because of his opposition to the entry of Soviet troops into Romania:

...on 23 December, the single Romanian soldier who could legally request a foreign intervention was General Gusa Stefan. That explains why Mikhail Moiseev, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR, discussed only with his Romanian counterpart the sending of some military forces to our country, and [only] as a result of the categorical refusal by Gusa

6 Gusa’s death and the related discussion about December 1989 received copious media coverage at the time in Romania. See, for example, in the then flagship opposition publication, *Evenimentul Zilei*, Ion Cristoiu, “O emotie semnificativa,” 31 martie 1994, p. 1; “Generalul Stefan Guse a luat cu el in mormint misterele revolutiei din Decembrie 1989” & “Evenimentul Zilei” aduce un pios omagiu generalului patriot,” 30 martie 1994, p.3.

7 The Indictment from July 2022 referenced by page numbers below can be accessed via the following link, https://www.mpublic.ro/sites/default/files/PDF/rechizitoriu_revolutie.pdf. For the earlier version of the Indictment from 2019, see <https://bit.ly/4banEkT>. The Indictment is based on the Revolution File itself, according to Pitu and others. As Andrei Ursu, a team of young Romanian researchers, and I have shown in the peer-reviewed studies based on thorough research of tens of thousands of original documents of the Revolution File, published in the volume *Căderea unui dictator. Război hibrid și dezinformare în Dosarul Revoluției din 1989* (Polirom 2022), and as I have shown on my blog (<https://rolandothomassonphd.blog/>), the Indictment thoroughly misrepresents and ignores the most revealing and important of those original documents. (Pitu does not even take into account important witness depositions that prosecutors, including himself, recorded in 2017, an illustrative example of which follows below.) In *Căderea unui dictator* and in other publications and fora, Andrei Ursu and I have presented significant amounts of credible evidence corroborated by eyewitnesses from across societal categories and institutional affiliations (revolutionaries, civilians, domestic and foreign medical staff, military officers and recruits, patriotic guards, and even members of the former Militia and Securitate), medical and ballistic data, pre-December 1989 Securitate documents, as well as declassified Western intelligence reports of the time, that make clear that there was a real counterrevolutionary enemy in December 1989—the so-called “terrorists.” That counterrevolutionary effort failed, but bloodily and with enduring impact to this day. Its origins and assumptions lay largely in so-called “resistance war” (“lupta de rezistentă”) planning from 1968 onward that envisioned a “stay behind” force to harass, intimidate, and slow down an advancing foreign invader—nominally NATO, but in reality, the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. Yet over time it was adapted and repurposed to enable the Securitate to prepare to counter a potential domestic military coup or popular uprising against the Ceausescu regime. The effort failed in part because it proved to be ill-tailored to a situation in which a very large popular uprising broke out AND the Romanian military defected to the people—as occurred in December 1989. It is within the framework of these basic facts that Gusa’s “heroic” role, the legend of the Soviet invasion, and the ghost of Pavel Corut in the Indictment and in its reception by some Romanian intellectuals, are analyzed here.

8 Soviet troops having arrived in 1944 in Romania and having been withdrawn in 1958.

did this intervention not take place. (*Rechizitoriul Dosarului Revolutiei*, p. 271)

The Indictment continues as follows:

Analysis of the testimonies reveal that on 23 December 1989, our country was confronted with a very dangerous situation, with possibly extreme consequences. Only by means of the exemplary behavior of the Chief of the General Staff of the Romanian Army and of the soldiers in the state border service⁹ was a military situation that would have been very unfavorable to our country, possibly with long-term negative consequences, prevented. It is also clear that the presence of Soviet troops on the Eastern border wasn't an accident, the result of a chance announcement on Romanian Television. It is also beyond any doubt a fact that this presence was possible because there existed a prior request to this effect, from the upper reaches of the political-military power in Romania [i.e. Ion Iliescu and senior members of the Council of National Salvation Front (CFSN)]. Nevertheless, the agreement on the part of the person with such authority—General Gusa Stefan—was missing. General Gusa Stefan's refusal to agree to this led him to fall into disgrace with the new regime and in a short time to be demoted. (p. 275)

In April 2023, Pitu repeated and expanded on the Indictment's claims to Laura Duta at *dcnews.ro* as follows:

General Stefan Gusa, before the Senatorial Commission [investigating December 1989], in 1993 talked about the presence of the Soviets and said the following: "I have never trusted the Russians and never will. History has taught us that all dangers come from there. This is well-known. And I believe that, God save me, dangers will again come exactly from there in the future."...As we can see, in 1993, General Stefan Gusa, unfortunately...was right. We talk about future dangers for Romania coming from the East. And we see that Gusa was completely correct!¹⁰

The view of General Gusa in the Indictment and by Prosecutor Pitu is thus clearly positive.

9 Momentous changes had just taken place elsewhere in the bloc: Honecker's removal and the breaching of the Berlin Wall, Zhivkov's ouster, and the ten day Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. Seemingly in preparation for an inevitable coming challenge to the regime—and also in the wake of negative news coverage following the escape of famous gymnast Nadia Comaneci across the Romanian border at the end of November 1989—the Border Guards were transferred from the Defense Ministry back to the Interior Ministry [i.e. M.I. D.S.S., Securitate] on 11-13 December 1989. Accounts differ on how much they were reintegrated prior to this shift and by the time of the Revolution in Romania. Nevertheless, this was yet another indication as to who, the Army or the Securitate, was trusted by Nicolae Ceausescu, and who, institutionally, had real influence in the late Ceausescu regime. See, for the announcement of the transfer, DECRET nr. 313 din 11 decembrie 1989 privind trecerea trupelor de granicieri de la Ministerul Apărării Naționale la Ministerul de Interne <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/46897>.

10 From approximately minute 15:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKFfjHXG6X0> and <https://bit.ly/3z9yeLS>. Duta goes on to ask Pitu if this was why the higher court had initially rejected the inclusion of testimony from the 1993-1995 "Gabrielescu Commission" in the Indictment, and he responds, "yes." For Gusa's statement before the Commission, see, for example, from 2019, Raport Comisia Gabrielescu – Gen. Ștefan Gușă: „Fusese cerut ajutor sovietic inclusiv în fața mea,” <https://bit.ly/3zfHvBP/>.

2. The Indictment on Alleged Soviet Intervention

The accusations regarding the Front's appeal for Soviet military intervention and Gusa's alleged heroic stand are inseparably linked to the Indictment's other, even more damning accusation against the CFSN leadership: that the "filo-soviet conspiracy" anchored by Ion Iliescu, Gelu Voican Voiculescu, General Nicolae Militaru, etc. "invented" a "Securitate terrorist" diversion to boost their revolutionary credentials and achieve their goal of hijacking the Revolution. The Indictment uses the terminology "securist-terrorist" no less than 70 times. In a wide-ranging media tour in 2023-2024, prosecutor Pitu used the term as follows: "The phenomenon of 'Securitate terrorists' was invented by the political-military group headed by Ion Iliescu in order to take power."¹¹

The Indictment thus alleges that there was no pro-Ceausescu counterrevolutionary attempt in December 1989. It is important to point out that the claims that there existed 1) pro-Ceausescu counterrevolutionaries, and 2) a request by the CFSN for Soviet military intervention, are not mutually-exclusive. The Indictment could have tarred the CFSN for appealing for Soviet military intervention, while not denying the existence of counterrevolutionary forces. It could have argued that the CFSN panicked or misjudged the threat against them, overestimating the danger posed by the counterrevolutionaries. Instead, the Indictment seeks to deny the existence of real counterrevolutionary forces. The very fact that the prosecutors deny it tells us that the really sensitive issue here is not the CFSN appeal for Soviet intervention, but the existence of pro-Ceausescu, Securitate-organized and -recruited "terrorists."

A central source for the Indictment are quotes from two of those interviewed in 2017—27+ years after the events in question—as linking the issues of Soviet entry into the country and the alleged "terrorist" threat directly:

"Gen. Eftimescu ordered me to establish telephone contact with gen. Moiseev and, after I made the connection, he ordered me to transmit the following: 'Could we count on eventual Soviet military aid against the terrorists?'" (p. 270, source "M.D."), and "The Soviet border guards chatted among themselves, after which the [Soviet] General asked me who are the terrorists operating in the Romanian capital, to which I responded that I did not know about them." (p. 272, source "T.G.").

The Indictment also alleges that the senior military officers who participated in the so-called "Securitate terrorist" diversion were precisely those who had carried out the repression of demonstrators in Timisoara, Sibiu, Cluj, Bucharest and elsewhere before the Ceausescu's flight on 22 December 1989 (see, for example, p. 80; 85; 257; 259; 297). More specifically: General Vasile Atanasie Stanculescu and General Mihai Chitac in Timisoara, or Colonel Aurel Dragomir in Sibiu. As for two others who were undeniably also deeply implicated in the pre-22 December repression—namely Securitate chief Iulian N. Vlad and General Gusa, both of whom made the point of being visible on 22/23 December 1989 by

11 In a 21 December 2023 interview with the journalist Melania Cincea, Pitu declared: „Fenomenul securiști-teroriști a fost inventat pentru ca grupul politico-militar în frunte cu Ion Iliescu să preia puterea.” See <https://bit.ly/3xld2lw>.

setting up shop in the CC building, in front of cameras and on videotape—the Indictment states that they did not participate in the “Securitate terrorist” “masquerade” and that in fact Gusa heroically sought to oppose it. In addition, the Indictment’s discussion of Gusa’s role in Timisoara underplay his orders in the repression, which is well-documented, instead stating that at the ELBA factory on 19 December 1989 he informed the other leaders of the repression that these were true demonstrators, rather than hooligans or foreign agents, and that he merely ordered the “recapturing” of seized tanks on Calea Girocului (p. 31; p. 29). It is obvious that Gusa is not treated in the same way in the Indictment as other senior military commanders involved in the pre-22 December repression, but instead appears to be granted a form of dispensation because of his role post-22 December 1989.

3. The Ghost of Pavel Corut in the Indictment

3.1 Pavel Corut on Stefan Gusa

This seductive, but fundamentally false narrative—Gusa as the hero who alone prevented the CFSN’s request for Soviet troops to enter Romania and the “Securitate-terrorist” phenomenon as a CFSN diversion and coup d’état to seize control of the Revolution—is far from new or original. It can be found in former Securitate (D.S.S.) Directorate IV (Military Counterintelligence, a.k.a. “CI”) officer Pavel Corut’s first novel in the Octogon series, where Corut wrote that “Guse and Vlad saved Romania” (*Quinta Sparta*, Editura Miracol 1992, p. 142.).¹² In Corut’s second volume, *Fulgerul Albastru*, he specified:

Only the firm position of General Stefan Guse prevented the invasion. Militaru had already ordered the Mechanized Division at Iasi to permit the unfettered passage of Soviet helicopters. Stefan Guse cancelled the order. He was punished by being demoted. He continues to be ostracized and terrorized. (*Fulgerul Albastru*, Editura Miracol 1993, p. 197)

Down to its details and even to some extent delivery one can see how Pitu and the Indictment thus echo Corut’s writings from three decades ago. And as a journalist opined in *Romania Libera* in August 1993,

In all his [Corut’s] books, from “Quinta sparta” and “Fulgerul albastru” to the latest [“Sa te nasti sub steaua noastra”], he accuses Ion Iliescu of treason. We do not know if the former counterintelligence officer is writing his books alone or if in the background there is a group settling scores with those who came to power [in December 1989]. *The fact that Stefan Gusa selected exactly Corut to whom to make these revelations is not accidental.* [emphasis added]¹³

In other words, this was part of a former Securitate-rump Ceausist elite narrative and

¹² Corut insinuated that the book was scheduled to hit newsstands before the fall 1992 general elections but was purposely delayed by Iliescu supporters. See *Sa te nasti sub steaua noastra*, Editura Gemenii 1993, p. 3.

¹³ Dorina Baesu, “Generalul Gusa s-a hotarat sa vorbeasca—Pentru prima oara, dovada ca, in decembrie ’89, Ion Iliescu a cerut ajutor militar sovietic,” *Romania Libera*, 16 August 1993, p. 3 (accessible on the Gusa Foundation site, https://www.fundatiagusa.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/1993_mese_08_giorno_16_Romania_Libera.pdf.) The foundation and site (<http://www.fundatiagusa.ro/>) appear to be run by Gusa’s daughter, who was

public relations campaign.

3.2 Pavel Corut on Soviet Intervention

There is also similarity between the sources interviewed in 2017 and presented in the Indictment to support the argument that in December 1989 Romania only narrowly averted a Soviet re-invasion of its territory, and the literature of former Ceausists, national-communists, and those with ties to the former Securitate.¹⁴ In his early 1993 interview with Corut, Gusa mentions a certain “Major Cioara” concerning the alleged, imminent Soviet invasion:

...I received information from Iasi and from the Coast Guard that there were attempts to enter the country from the East, including from the sea. I thought that in this serious situation we had to resist. Of course those who reported to me had received information from somewhere else. This guy from Iasi, Major [sic.] Cioara, tried to reach me in the CC building, by telephone. He asked me: What should we do, Comrade General? My response was: “Die in the trenches!” In other words, on the border, alongside the Border Guards...He had information from reconnaissance and border guard troops that the Soviets were preparing to enter with armored vehicles and helicopters. I ordered him: Don’t let anybody pass, die in the trenches! I told everybody with whom I spoke that night, including the border guards, the same thing: Let nothing pass! Open fire!... (*Sa te nasti sub steaua noastra*, Editura Gemenii 1993, pp. 133-134)

In the pages of the former Securitate periodical *Vitralii*, it is noteworthy that Iasi Securitate Col. (r) Ion Frujinoiu, Col. (r) Constantin Pleșea, and Col. (r) Constantin Ciurlău have warm words for the cooperation of Col. Cioara with them in December 1989¹⁵—much as Gusa himself did for Securitate Director General Iulian Vlad. Botosani Border Guards Commander Gheorghe Togan—the source of the quote from the Indictment on page 5 above¹⁶—has also been paired with Cioara in the writing of “national communist” nostalgics, as a key figure who allegedly played an important role in forestalling the

married to the late Iosif Constantin Dragan. Corut also appears to have had links to Dragan, who was known to have ties to the former Securitate and who both before and after December 1989 promoted extreme nationalist causes. Corut began his post-Ceausescu journalistic career in Dragan’s publications, including “Natiunea,” in late 1990, as he mentions here: <https://evz.ro/secretele-lui-pavel-corut-815652.html>.

14 Moreover, in an early 2020 article in which Pitu is introduced to the public as the author of the Indictment, the Indictment’s conclusions on the Soviet role are described as based on the SRI’s 1994 “Preliminary Report on the Events of December 1989”: “Procurorii militari au eliminat ipoteza intervenției străine în decembrie ‘89. Ei scriu negru pe alb, bazându-se pe un raport al SRI, că intervenția nu s-a justificat, pentru că instalarea la putere a grupării lui Ion Iliescu a fost agreată de URSS.” (quoted in Silviu Sergiu, “Turiștii sovietici de la Revoluție „au așteptat un ordin care n-a mai venit,” *Newsweek.ro*, 9 februarie 2020, <https://newsweek.ro/istorie/turistii-sovietici-de-la-revolutie-au-asteptat-un-ordin-care-n-a-mai-venit>.) The SRI (Serviciul Roman de Informatii / The Romanian Intelligence service) was unveiled in March 1990, reemploying many former Securitate cadres. See the “Armagedon 7” report for a partial list of names (https://media.hotnews.ro/media_server1/document-2011-01-28-8248321-0-07-armagedon-7-sri.pdf).

15 *Vitralii* III/nr. 9, decembrie 2011, Iași: „Revoluția” molcomă: Col. (r) Ion Frujinoiu, Col. (r) Constantin Pleșea, Col. (r) Constantin Ciurlău, p. 79; p. 81, at <https://acmrr-sri.ro>.

16 “The Soviet border guards chatted among themselves, after which the [Soviet] General asked me who are the terrorists operating in the Romanian capital, to which I responded that I did not know about them.” (pp. 271-272, source “T.G.” Declaratii vol. II, pp. 112-118, audiat 29.05.2017).

alleged pending Soviet invasion.¹⁷

It is worth pointing out for Romanian audiences that Mark Kramer, head of Harvard University's Cold War Studies Program and perhaps the researcher who has done more archival research in the Soviet archives than anyone on the collapse of communism in the Warsaw Pact in 1989, has not found anything to substantiate the claims that the Soviets intended to intervene or were on the verge of a military intervention in Romania.¹⁸ That the Soviets, after having not intervened in Czechoslovakia and East Germany—the largest and most important outpost of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe—in the fall of 1989 and after in early December 1989 having publicly renounced the so-called “Brezhnev Doctrine” of a right to intervene in a fellow “socialist state,” would then essentially change their minds and intervene militarily in a state of marginal consequence to Soviet geopolitical calculations (the issue of Moldova aside)—Romania—strains the imagination. And this was a Soviet Union buffeted by internal problems during this period—having bloodily suppressed demonstrations in Tbilisi in April 1989, strikes in Ukraine in summer 1989, upheaval in the Baltics especially from late summer 1989, miners' strikes in Vorkuta in October 1989, and then in January 1990 engaging in a violent crackdown in Baku. Yet Pitu's Indictment asks us to believe that Romania narrowly averted a Soviet invasion and occupation in December 1989 thanks to the “heroic” actions of General Gusa.

„Finally, one should observe that, had the Soviets be truly intent on invading Romania, having massed “armored vehicles and helicopters” in view of the Romanian reconnaissance units (a move that would have been strategized and ordered at top USSR echelons and noticed by NATO surveillance/reported by Western intelligence), one would be hard-pressed to believe that they would have stopped because General Gusa told them so.¹⁹ If so, why did it take so long for generals Militaru and Stanculescu or Ion Iliescu and the CFSN leadership to remove him? Why not dismiss him—Militaru had already been named Defense Minister—and have his more pliant replacement countermand his order and allow the Soviets' entry, especially as the Indictment asks us to believe there was no real “terrorist” threat, making Gusa's presence doubly unnecessary? And we are asked to believe that Gusa's firm “no” to Moiseev, and the firm rejections and scowls of border guards were enough for the Soviets to abandon their plans and turn back?

3.3 Pavel Corut and Other Former Securitate Officers on the “Securitate terrorist' diversion”

Pavel Corut routinely invokes the terms “securisti-teroristi [Securitate terrorist],” “diversiune [diversion],” and “filosovietic [Sovietophile]” in both his prolific and popular book series and in his interviews with the press.²⁰ In 1994, he wrote the following:

17 See, for example, <https://bit.ly/3zhqQxN>.

18 See, for example, Mark Kramer, “The Demise of the Soviet Bloc,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 63, no. 9 (November 2011), pp. 1535-1590, at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41302183> ; <https://bit.ly/4bWegmd>.

19 My thanks to Andrei Ursu for the observations in this paragraph.

20 See, for example, Pavel Corut, *Quinta Sparta*, p. 135 on the latter; *Fulgerul albastru*, pp. 195-196; *Sa te nasti sub steaua noastra*, p. 128; *Floarea de Argint*, Editura Miracol, 1994, p. 194. He uses both terms in the following interview, *Transilvania Jurnal*, 31 ianuarie 2000, p.11 (accessed in <https://adt.arcanum.com>

The *coup d'état* which 'recovered the Revolution'...brought to power the FSN [the National Salvation Front] gang...[which] initiated the criminal scenario with the *Securitate-terrorists* in order to spill blood and justify the assumption of power by people who had no business proclaiming themselves to be revolutionaries...[I]t was a diversion of the FSN in order to escalate the terror, suspicion, blood-letting, [and] chaos necessary to resolve the problem of taking state power and calling the Soviets.²¹

Another former CI-st (Securitate's IVth Directorate), Valentin Raiha, also wrote similarly in 1994:

...the Power then initiated the Securitate-terrorist diversion, creating the impression of an imminent civil war and thus only the "emanating" Power could save the Revolution. Thus, the provocateurs and leaders of the diversion, the "emanations"²² tried to create the aura of being the saviors of the Revolution in order to justify their seizure of power. It is correct and true to say that the diversion was designed to mask the coup d'état.²³

Finally, former Securitate officer Filip Teodorescu devotes an entire chapter (pp. 113-157) in his 1992 memoir, *Un Risc Asumat* (Viitorul Romanesc, 1992) to the alleged "Securitate terrorist diversion," making similar self-serving claims.

4. Former Securitate and High Ranking Ceausists Invoked in the Indictment

It is not only the ghost of Pavel Corut that haunts the Indictment. The accounts of former high-ranking members of the Ceausescu regime and Securitate officers not only show up in the Indictment, but are invoked to buttress the Indictment's claims. For example, Army General Constantin Olteanu, who was Defense Minister from 1980 to 1985, and who was initially tried as part of the so called "Procesul CPEX" [loosely, "The Politburo Trial"] of senior officials accused of complicity in the pre-22 December repression, is quoted favorably in the Indictment as having said:

I believe the diversion that occurred in December 1989 was used by the newly-installed power in Romania. By means of the diversion, an enemy of the revolution and revolutionaries was created. There needed to exist an enemy against whom to fight and this way they legitimized themselves. (p. 255)

Head of the Securitate's First Directorate (Internal Intelligence, i.e. the "political police") Colonel Gheorghe Ratiu is also cited as authoritative and credible by Pitu and the other prosecutors:

archive).

21 Pavel Corut, *Cantecul Nemuririi*, Editura Miracol 1994, pp. 170; 172, as quoted in Richard Andrew Hall, "The Uses of Absurdity: The Staged War Theory and the Romanian Revolution of December 1989," *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Fall 1999), p. 510.

22 In the aftermath of the Revolution, Iliescu and the senior officials of the Front had referred to themselves as "the emanation" of the Revolution.

23 Valentin Raiha, *Revolutia Romana si Jocul Serviciilor Secrete*, Euxenus-Impus, Baia Mare, 1994, p. 16.

What followed beginning on the night of 22 December 1989 was in fact the operationalization of diversion operations, created by the Ministry of Defense. The operational group was formed from generals and officers of the Ministry of Defense...They wanted to make an impression on the population in order to ensure that they would take a step back and support the new leadership. (p. 255)²⁴

Scrutiny as to the motives of these high-ranking former Securitate officers and notorious Ceausists are missing in Pitu's Indictment. Unfortunately, they have been absent in media coverage and public commentary on the Indictment as well.

5. How the Legacy of Ceausescu's Anti-Soviet Nationalism Has Left Romanians Vulnerable to Former Securitate Revisionism

Anti-Russian sentiment in Romania and the former Warsaw Pact and former Soviet countries is today very understandable, particularly in light of Vladimir Putin's aggression against and war crimes in Ukraine since 2014, and especially since February 2022. Furthermore, anti-Soviet and anti-Russian sentiment about extensive periods in history and experiences during communist rule are understandable. However, historical records and our media and literature analysis unequivocally show that this sentiment has been exploited in Romania by those wishing to whitewash the crimes of the former Securitate in December 1989.

It is also a known fact that a broad swath of Romania's intelligentsia was anesthetized by the anti-Soviet sentiment promoted by Ceausescu and the Securitate, especially during the period from August 1968, well into the 1970s. Romanians, including intellectuals, journalists, and academics, have been exploited for years by those promoting the anti-Soviet/anti-Russian narrative. The strategy became clearer during the late Ceausescu years, after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union. However, it did not stop then.

Add to this: former Securitate disinformation in Romanian society and media during

²⁴ It is worth adding here, that in the pages of the national-communist, former Securitate weekly *Europa*, Ratiu claimed that in a meeting at the Defense Ministry in the wake of the execution of the Ceausescus on 25 December 1989, he briefed other Securitate and military commanders that "Hungarian extremists" seconded by groups arriving from Hungary were attempting to separate Transylvania and the Banat from Romania and driving ethnic Romanians out of these regions. (As Andrei Ursu notes, this is typical of 1980s style Securitate disinformation, as shown in numerous CNSAS documents (see for example, ACNSAS, Fond Documentar, 8852, vol. 23, pp. 2v, 4v, 6, etc, including documents from December 1989 - ACNSAS, Fond Documentar 13906 Vol 7, p. 32 verso, pp. 46-48, etc., apud. *Tragatori si mistificatori*, Polirom 2019). In fact "Hungarian extremists" ("irredentists") and other foreign agencies were obsessively, if falsely, blamed by Nicolae Ceausescu for the December 1989 "hooligan disturbances" (see for example, "Discursul lui Ceaușescu din 20 decembrie 1989. Ce nu s-a văzut la TV: Total face parte dintr-un plan mai general împotriva independenței popoarelor", *Adevarul*, 20 decembrie 2018). Significantly, Ratiu claims that only one Army General supported him: Stefan Gusa (despite the fact that both General Nicolae Militaru and General Victor Atanasie Stanculescu were present, as he notes). Ratiu's clear effort to still engage in disinformation at that hour and his claim that from the Defense Ministry, Gusa and *only* Gusa supported him, highlights that the common popular idea about the Revolution—that "everyone was on the same side," the idea of an interlocking unified front among the members of the supposed "political military conspiracy that seized power"—is a myth. Gusa held with the former Securitate, to General Vlad as we saw above, and as demonstrated here by Ratiu. See Gheorghe Ratiu, interviewed by Ilie Neacsu, *Europa*, episodes XVII and XVIII, March-April 1995.

and since December 1989; official obfuscation and obstruction; that because it is such a foundational event in Romania's recent history most public figures feel compelled to express a viewpoint no matter their level of interest in and investigation of what happened; an overemphasis on personal lived experience alone at the expense of broader, comprehensive, comparative analysis; and the tendency to trust rumor—no matter what societal group we are speaking of, that comes from friends, acquaintances, political allies, and those in positions of power and authority.²⁵

Members of self-declared political or intellectual groupings are rarely good at recognizing and especially poor at publicly acknowledging what they have in common with their rivals and competitors, rather than what differentiates them from the latter. That has definitely been true of the reception of Pitu's Indictment by some among self-proclaimed pro-NATO, pro-Europe, democratic, anti-communist intellectuals. The lack of scrutiny of the prosecutor's use of sources amounts to a form of suspension of disbelief. For example, in a video interview in which he accompanies Pitu, whose Indictment he openly supports, a well-known Timisoara²⁶ intellectual encourages Pitu to be "epic!" when answering an interviewer's question.²⁷ Indeed, Pitu is "epic" but it is unclear if the intellectual, the retired military magistrate himself, or even most Romanians realize how "epic" Catalin Ranco Pitu is.

Here is why Pitu's Indictment can indeed be qualified as "epic": it alleges perhaps *the largest, most successful FALSE FLAG²⁸ operation in the history of mankind: Iliescu,*

25 For discussion of the first and last points in particular--the role of Securitate disinformation, and the former Securitate's ability to exploit the post-totalitarian legacy of trust in rumor transmitted by "pile, cunostiinte, si relatii" (connections, acquaintances, and relatives)--and how these factors interacted to undermine public understanding of what happened in December 1989 during the 1990s, see Richard Andrew Hall, "The Uses of Absurdity: The Staged War Theory and the Romanian Revolution of December 1989," *East European Politics and Societies* vol. 13, no. 3 (1999): 501-542.

26 Pitu grew up in Timis County as well, which seems to be a factor here.

27 Approximately minute 10:08, *Recomandări la Înălțime #26 - Cătălin Ranco Pițu & Vasile Popovici - Revoluția Română din 1989*, UVT Media Hub, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbL7i7UQEeU&t=2s>. On 21 December 2023, Popovici expanded on public social media (Facebook/META): "For the first time we have a complete well-argued and logical picture of the military repression of December 1989 and the seizing of power on 22 December 1989. The author of this piecing together of what took place is Catalin Ranco-Pitu, former military prosecutor with the rank of general, responsible for the Revolution File, a Timisoaran, one in a million....[Pitu's Indictment argues] that at the moment when the popular uprising became overwhelming, the Army launched the terrorist diversion with the goal of stopping the revolutionary wave, while the Army surrendered state power to the Moscow group, who assured those officers involved in the [pre-22 December] repression and still in the leadership of the Army, impunity [for their crimes]....It is thus difficult to still repeat the banality today: we want the truth about the Revolution! We already have it. For the first time, for those of us who are still here, we can await a drop of Justice, as much as is possible. Is Romania capable of offering this drop of justice?" But not everyone from Timisoara who appreciates Pitu has as positive reputation as Popovici. Former Securitate officer, indicted and briefly imprisoned for his role in the repression of demonstrators in December 1989, Radu Tinu has warmly embraced Pitu and his television appearances: "Congratulations on the achievement [addressed to Razvan Butaru of TVR], congratulations to the courageous magistrate Rancu [sic.] Pitu! This is the crude truth. I believe that all other magistrates who worked on the Revolution File before Rancu [sic.] Pitu should be demoted." [6 December 2023, on the page of FB page of Razvan Butaru; on his own FB page (16 February 2024) Tinu has praised "RAZVAN BUTARU (by all means, in capital letters)" for the interview and Pitu's finalization after 34 years of the Revolution File, adding "finally after 34 years, the truth!" He then goes on to detail how in 1990 he argued for the non-existence of the "terrorists" and the Army's responsibility for the post-22nd deaths and how he has now been vindicated by Pitu.]

28 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_flag. That this is what Popovici believes, even if he may be unfamiliar with

Teodor Brates, Militaru, Stanculescu and a handful of others are accused of having, directly or complicitly, created basically on the fly a nationwide informational and operational diversion to trick people into believing that there existed “Securitate terrorists” who remained loyal to Nicolae Ceausescu, after “12:08” on 22 December 1989.

Moreover, the Indictment implies that NO ONE at the time, nowhere in the country, in the *chaos* of the events as they were transpiring—other than the Securitate themselves²⁹--had the opportunity to publicly express any doubt that the terrorists were real, whether on television, or radio, or in the newspapers,³⁰ or to foreign journalists in the country to cover the events. Significantly, a review of the media of the time shows that it was not revolutionaries in Timisoara or Bucharest who after December 1989 first enunciated these “false-flag” claims in the press. Such claims were exclusively POST-FACTO and retrospective, emerging months and years after December 1989. Moreover, and not surprisingly, even in the media, the first articulations of these claims came not from Timisoara or Bucharest revolutionaries, but from the former Securitate and their collaborators.³¹

the concept and language, is demonstrated by his use of the term “the diversion of the diversion” elsewhere in public social media comments: that is, the notion of invented terrorists, of the creation of the impression of an enemy still loyal to Ceausescu, that did not exist. Popovici attempts to buttress this view by claiming that ‘the game was up,’ that the Securitate had given up on 22 December 1989, and invokes a piece of Revolutionary folklore that General Marin Neagoe, head of the Securitate’s Fifth Directorate charged with guarding and protecting the Ceausescus, fled to his lover’s apartment as supposed “evidence” of this. As mentioned previously, we are able to state definitively that Pitu has not even taken into consideration interviews/depositions he appears to have been involved with in 2017. A relevant example is the following declaration about the same Neagoe (Revolution File. Dosar Scanat. Dosarul Revolutie Nou. Declaratii vol. II, pp. 189-196, S. T.’s declaration, 27 iulie 2017. The initials of the signing military prosecutor appear to be PCR, which match those of Pitu Catalin Ranco): “On the occasion of the second interrogation General [Marin] Neagoe declared in my presence that there existed ‘sworn’ elements who would continue to operate in support of the two dictators until they were removed [from the scene]....Asked who directed and coordinated these elements still loyal to the dictator Neagoe asked to be taken by escort to two locations in the area of the Telephone Palace which he claimed were command centers.” <https://bit.ly/45vZYpT>.

- 29 Most absurdly and memorably, General Vlad: “helicopters? We [the Securitate] have only THREE in total. [To a revolutionary] Perhaps they are yours?!”— in the video dubbed “Noaptea generalilor [The Night of the Generals].”
- 30 The myth of longstanding preparation and coordination and total control in the media apparatus by a preexisting National Salvation Front beginning from 12:08 on 22 December 1989—the alleged interlocking unified front among the members of the supposed “political military conspiracy that seized power” referenced in fn. 24 above — is exploded by the first issue of *Libertatea* on 22 December 1989 whose banner reads: “*Libertatea: Ziar al Frontului Renasterii Nationale*”.
- 31 The earliest publicly recorded expressions *from revolutionaries*—on videotape or in the press—suggesting that a false flag operation had occurred appear to have been in April 1990, for example Dumitru Dinca in Bucharest. This suggests that many of the claims about the terrorists having not existed/having been invented are solely retrospective—telescoping a belief back in time to an earlier date than it was in reality. By contrast, we can point to far earlier examples (January 1990) of Securitate revisionism seeking to suggest “Voi ati tras unii in altii ca prostii, [“You shot into each other like a bunch of idiots,” i.e. no real enemy “terrorists” existed]”—see the quotes of Brasov participants in Mircea Florin Sandru, “Brasov: Intrebari care asteapta raspuns (II),” *Tineretul Liber*, 17 ianuarie 1990, p. 1, p. III-a; for an example of how this spread to the international press, see Sahia Film’s Grigore Corpacescu, who had been trusted enough by the Ceausescu regime to film the aftermath of the Timisoara revolt and repression before the regime’s collapse, in Richard Bassett, “Rising linked to Russian tourists,” *The Times (London)*, 2 March 1990: “Mr. [Grigore] Corpacescu has no doubt that the revolution here was carefully stage-managed – **as was the case in Prague and East Berlin** [emphasis added] – by the Russians. *They were certainly critically involved both before and after,*” he says...”*The [Securitate] pilot of*

Another well-known Romanian-American intellectual³² who has promoted Pitu and his claims over the past year, while also criticizing and lampooning the likes of Ion Cristoiu, Sorin Rosca Stanescu, and Dan “Felix” Voiculescu and his media empire as representing the former Securitate, seems unaware of Pitu’s reception and promotion specifically by Cristoiu, Rosca Stanescu, and Felix’s media empire. Pitu began his 2023-2024 media offensive after he retired in March 2023 in cozy interviews on Ion Cristoiu’s channel at *Gandul*.³³ Rosca Stanescu invoked the Indictment in the Revolution file to call for a second Nurnberg trial, in this case of Ion Iliescu and company.³⁴ Pitu’s appearances in late 2023 on Voiculescu’s Antena 3, hosted by Mihai Gadea, were predictably accompanied by a cast of former Securitate-affiliated characters, including for example, Alex Mihai Stoenescu.³⁵

The fact that Cristoiu, Rosca Stanescu, and Voiculescu’s networks should have promoted Pitu and embraced his claims about the Securitate should come as no surprise. Cristoiu after all was in the forefront of those seeking to rehabilitate Gusa in 1990, and he was, as shown elsewhere, a key conduit for launching Angela Bacescu and Pavel Corut (first under the name Paul Cernescu) in his publications from 1990 to 1992.³⁶ Rosca Stanescu wrote in *Romania Libera* in 1990 and 1991, but his articles on December 1989 were so filled with Securitate disinformation³⁷ that the aforementioned Filip Teodorescu

this helicopter is an old friend. I have many friends in the police, Timisoara was not started by the Hungarian pastor; the Reverend Laszlo Tokes”According to Mr. Corpacescu a party of Soviet ‘tourists,’ all usually on individual visas, arrived in Timisoara two days before the first demonstration outside Mr. [i.e. Pastor] Tokes’ house. Police records trace them reaching Bucharest on December 20. By the 24th, two days after Ceausescu fled by helicopter, the Russians had disappeared. No police records exist to indicate how they left the country.”. For additional examples and context, see *Scurtul moment al adevărului și începutul mistificării Revoluției: anul 1990*, Roland O. Thomasson în colaborare cu Andrei Ursu. În „România de la comunism la postcomunism: Criză, transformare, democratizare” / Anuarul IICMER, vol. XIV-XV (2019-2020), Editori: Dalia BĂTHORY, Ștefan BOSOMITU, Cosmin BUDEANCĂ. Institutul de Investigare a Crimelor Comunismului și Memoria Exilului Românesc. – Editura Polirom, 2020.

32 See the public social media posts (Facebook/META) of Professor Vladimir Tismaneanu.

33 March 21, 2023 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkzwwNVJf4E&t=180s> ; May 16, 2023 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un1LgIkgdc&t=13s> .

34 <https://www.sroscas.ro/site/2024/01/05/nurnberg-doi/>.

35 <https://www.antena3.ro/emisiuni/sinteza-zilei/pagina-4> ; multiple episodes from December 2023.

36 See especially, Richard Andrew Hall, “The Uses of Absurdity: The Staged War Theory and the Romanian Revolution of December 1989,” *East European Politics and Societies* vol. 13, no. 3 (1999): 501-542; Richard Andrew Hall, “The Dynamics of Media Independence in Post-Ceausescu Romania,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* vol. 12, no. 4 (December 1996): 102-123; and Richard Andrew Hall (Hall, R. A.), 2002, “The Securitate Roots of a Modern Romanian Fairy Tale: The Press, the Former Securitate, and the Historiography of December 1989,” *Radio Free Europe* “East European Perspectives,” Vol. 4, nos. 7-9, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1342502.html> .

37 See, for example, Sorin Rosca Stanescu from 14 June 1990, “...in the Army, more and more insistently there is talk of the over 4,000 ‘LADA’ automobiles with two men per car, which travelled by various routes in the days preceding the Revolution and then disappeared...” (Sorin Rosca Stanescu, “Se destrama conspiratia tacerii? [Is the conspiracy of silence unravelling?]” *Romania Libera*, 14 June 1990, 2a); in Sorin Rosca Stanescu, “Iliescu aparat de K.G.B.? [Iliescu defended by the KGB?]” *Romania Libera*, 18 April 1991, 8, SRS wrote of “the insistent rumors which have been circulating referring to the existence on Romanian territory of 2,000 ‘LADA’ automobiles with Soviet tags and two men inside each car...” and closed by asking his readers: “What did the Ceausescu couple know but were unable to say? Why is general Vlad held in this ambiguous chess game?... Is Iliescu protected by the KGB?”; Filip Teodorescu commented cynically as follows on the latter article in *Un Risc Asumat*, pp. 93-94: “Besides, I have no reason to suspect that the journalist Sorin Rosca Stanescu would

could not stop himself in his 1992 memoir from praising Rosca Stanescu's claims about December 1989.³⁸ Voiculescu's publications and television stations have long been known for hosting his friends from the former Securitate.

6. Conclusion

2024 is not only the 30th anniversary of Stefan Gusa's death, but also the 30th anniversary of when Securitate-inspired revisionism on December 1989 can be said to have triumphed. 1994 was indeed a turning point year. By the fall of 1994, Iulian Vlad and all the senior CPEX members had been freed from jail by the regime of President Ion Iliescu.³⁹ Three events defined and solidified the revisionist Securitate account of December 1989 during 1994: 1) the SRI Preliminary Report on December 1989; 2) the so called Gabrielescu Senatorial Commission which held the majority of its hearings during this year; and 3) the release in December 1994 of the Military Prosecutor's Office (headed by Samoila Joarza) *Sinteza 1990-1994* investigating December 1989.

The media page of the Gusa Foundation unintentionally captures how at that time—1994/1995—the anti-Soviet/Russian Gusa cult and Securitate disinformation on December 1989 crossed ideological and partisan barriers.⁴⁰ For 1994-1995, we find articles on these topics from *Romania Libera*, *Romanul*, *Romania Mare*, *Ziua*,⁴¹ and *Revista 22*.⁴² In other words, across the political and cultural spectrum, with publications that despised each other, arguing for the same conclusions. The last two articles in that list in particular are interesting and telling because these were publications of the anti-Iliescu regime's democratic opposition, but the authors were two with former Securitate ties: Sorin Rosca Stanescu and Cornel Ivanciuc.⁴³

In closing, I will note that thankfully not all western-leaning intellectuals at the time were unaware of or ignored what was going on, even if they did not fully realize the extent and depth of the problem. Michael Shafir recognized in late 1993 why Corut's and Corut-like revisionism had a chance of succeeding among important segments of the Romanian

have invented a story in order to come to the defense of those accused by the judicial system and public opinion of the tragic consequences of the December 1989 events." Citations from Hall publications.

38 See Hall (1996, 1999, 2002) in fn. 36.

39 Regarding these developments, see, for example: *Expres Magazin*, 12-19 ianuarie 1994, p. 10; RFE/RL no. 60, 28 March 1994 at <https://bit.ly/3xnjBnC>; RFE/RL no. 180, 21 September 1994, <https://bit.ly/3VPbA4k>.

40 <https://www.fundatiagusa.ro/media-presa/>.

41 https://www.fundatiagusa.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/1994-mese-12-giorno-14_Ziua.pdf.

42 MAI/IUNIE 1995 În topul FSN, generalul Gușă a fost desemnat primul trădător al Revoluției.

22 săptămânal independent de analiza politică 31 mai - 6 iunie 1995,

https://www.fundatiagusa.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/1995-mese-05-giorno-31_Servicii-Secrete.pdf.

43 <http://www.revista22.ro/colaborarea-lui-ivanciuc-la-revista-22-3194.html> ; <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-arhiva-1147456-cornel-ivanciuc-turnat-fost-platit-securitate.htm> ; Patrick Andre de Hillerin, "Intregul domn Ivanciuc?" *Saptamana Financiara*, 13 noiembrie 2006. Ivanciuc, similar to Rosca Stanescu, denied the existence of counterrevolutionary pro-Ceausescu Securitate terrorists, and instead sought to suggest that they were Soviet forces. In Cornel Ivanciuc, "Raporturile dintre Frontul Salvării Naționale și KGB [The Relations between the National Salvation Front and the KGB]," 22, no. 21 (24-30 May 1995), p. 11, he maintained that the Soviets achieved their aims in December 1989 by means of the so-called "tourist-incursionists, whose activity during the revolution was identical to those of the *Spetsnaz* special troops for reconnaissance and diversion of the GRU [Soviet military intelligence]." In other words: former Securitate disinformation.

population—including “*large segments of the democratic opposition*”—because its

...main objective—the rehabilitation of the *Securitate*...is perhaps made easier by the fact that Corut combines the ‘stolen revolution’ theory, which is so popular among large segments of the democratic opposition, with arguments that may be regularly found in the ‘nostalgic’ national-communist periodicals such as the Greater Romania Party’s weekly *Romania mare*, the allegedly independent weekly *Europa*, and the publications owned by Socialist Labor Party Senator Adrian Paunescu—*Vremea* and *Totusi iubirea*.⁴⁴

As we can see today, especially by looking at the uncritical reception of Pitu’s claims and his Indictment by those from among what were then (1993) the *large segments of the democratic opposition*, Shafir’s prediction has sadly proved right.

⁴⁴ Michael Shafir, “Best-selling Spy Novels Seek to Rehabilitate Romanian *Securitate*,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 45, 12 November 1993, p. 15 (pp. 13-18).