

Romania and the Orthodox Church Under the Communist Regime

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Abstract: Communism is an ideology opposing religion and Christianity through all its components. The conflict among them breaks through at all levels, from the level of thought to that of practical applicability. Communism in postwar Romania was installed not due to any mass sympathy but due to the involvement of the USSR and to some favourable political contexts made available to the Soviet leaders by the Western states from the anti-Hitler front. The elections in 1947 were a great farce which unfortunately received the approval of the great European powers. Romania was left voluntarily to the disposal of the USSR which imposed its own ruling model. The consequences at a political, social and military-strategic level have been so difficult to measure. For almost half a century most of Eastern Europe was dominated by communism. At a religious level, Christianity was oppressed under various forms and has subsisted due to some personalities who succeeded in applying a survival policy.

Keywords: communism; orthodox church; government; armed insurrection; political class; democracy; ideology; reforms; political parties

1. August 23rd, 1944: Rise of the Communist Party. The First Actions to Take Over the Power

The Communist ideology claims its origins in the thought of some Coryphées well-known nowadays due to the “publicity” made for almost a century by their “apprentices”. Of course, we make reference especially to Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, to Lenin and V.I. Stalin, but the list could be long and packed with exotic or hilarious characters, yet it may also comprise notorious names of culture, arts, economics or European thought and not only.

The man and the anthropomorphic, egocentric, secularist and atheist thought were emphasized at first during the Age of Enlightenment. Later, Marxism shall take over the idea and exploit it in its own interest. The entire program of the Communist Party will attempt to accredit the belief that everything that takes place within the socialist order is done to the benefit of the common man, of the popular

masses, and that “religion is the people’s opium”. Despite the fact that in the Communist Constitutions it will be stipulated a seeming religious openness, a so-called freedom to display the religious faith at a general level. However, that was only “to pull the wool over people’s eyes”, as in fact, ever since the instauration of Communism in Russia which had become Soviet, the Church had a lot to suffer. It is well known that V.I. Lenin, as well as his predecessor and ideological mentor Karl Marx, was a confirmed atheist, who hated deeply religion. In these conditions, it is no wonder that immediately after the instauration of the Bolshevik power, Lenin regarded the Russian Orthodox Church as an enemy, as a possible force which could oppose the people’s power at any time. The measures taken in this respect contributed to the establishment of a regime of strict control of the Soviet state over the Church.

The first state where the Communist system took strong roots was old Russia, shattered at the beginning of the 20th century by the Great Bolshevik Revolution, in October 1917. The traditional tsarist regime was attacked and overthrown by the red warriors. Communism did not remain only an “exotic” element of human thought, it gained a very concrete line through the force of the Red revolution.

Even since 1917, Lenin had arrogated to himself the statute of “leader” of the “working class” in the fight against the “exploiter classes”, and he imposed his authority over his subordinates using measures of unsuspected force. Terror became the signal word in the actions of the Communists often subdued almost blindly. It was imposed a state of permanent siege, a kind of continuous war to achieve the socialist desiderata. Hostages, abusive measures, arrests were very common. The principle “who is not with us is against us” gained the status of law. The revolutionary propaganda was extremely aggressive. A whole system to convince the population of the communist and socialist “welfare” was propelled.

For several years the system had been driven from the spheres of the new Communist aristocracy, it seemed that it worked and it showed its results through all the revolutionary transformations suffered by the old Russian state which had become a Soviet one. World War II came as a glove for all the expansionist tendencies of the USSR, which had arrived meanwhile under the authoritarian and more despotic rule of Iosif Visarionovici Stalin. The tyrant, thirsty for power, sacrificed without any remorse not only opponents but also allies, entire battalions and regiments of soldiers, just to appease the unmeasured power thirst of the “beloved ruler”. In the said conditions, it did not come as a surprise to anyone that

the ravenous eyes of the “father” looked more and more insistently to the Kingdom of Romania, which was in a very delicate strategic position.

In fact, the moment of the army insurrection on the 23rd of August 1944 had been thoroughly prepared and directed by agents of the Soviets, who had infiltrated cleverly on the territory of Romania in the 1920s - 1930s. The propaganda actions after that date multiplied considerably, gaining more and more strength. The fact itself was amplified by the penetration into the most influent political circles of the time of elements coming from the left parties, especially from the Romanian Communist Party and the National Democratic Party. As we have shown on a different occasion, the political ability of the Communist representatives was perfect. Fighting next to the ones who wanted to overthrow the government of marshal Antonescu, they filled an empty space on the political stage of the time. The immediate gain was huge, especially if we take into account the real number of party members, the cloudy past of the communist and socialist organizations in Romania, the terror to which they had been submitted several months before, and the fact that they had just come out of illegality.

In order to understand the Communist phenomenon as a whole, it is absolutely necessary that the study starts with the ideological bases and also with the analysis of the repressive mechanisms which are nothing else but the power put to practice of the system in its essence. The directives, the organization structures, the elements for imposing the power as well as all the decisional and enforcement mechanisms should be analyzed with maximum attention.

“The people’s force” took its sap from the class hatred, from the desire of physical or psychic extermination of all enemies. The beautiful package of the socialist welfare broke easily allowing to be seen all the awful elements of that barbarian and inhuman system. Nevertheless, Communism has survived until nowadays, even though in isolated places, and it continues to raise fierce disputes.

“The new man” created by the Communist ideology was alienated essentially from any form of moral wellbeing, remaining with a hollow, exterior ethic. Returning to ideology, it also materialized in the legislative measures taken in that period in order to support all the actions promoted by the Communist authorities established in Romania after the 9th of March 1948.

Communism, as a frightful dragon, as an antique god swallows continuously blood and lives from the dedicated shrine. Unfaithfulness is renewed and revives from the

absurd ideological ash and remains, which crept through the ages perfidiously and venomously.

The experiment from the USSR, where the Orthodox Church was beheaded and enslaved had proven to be a lamentable failure. Christians did not give up even though aberrant laws forbid even the family religious education. With and without martyrs, faith resisted and revived from its own ashes. Testimonials such as the ones of Archbishop Luca of Crimea come to confirm a reality. Christ cannot be taken forcefully out of the hearts of those who love Him completely.

This was only to speak about some aspects that led in a very short time to a major conflict, to a life and death fight between two completely opposite ways of thinking. The winner? Christ “was, is and will be the Same”, while Communism is for us a bad memory, a nightmare of mankind which was removed as an old and stale coat.

For 2000 years, the holy Church has been voicing Christ, the Lord, the Sun of justice, “the Way, the Truth and the Life”.

2. General Political Framework (on August 23rd, 1944)

Our approach starts at the moment when a phenomenon easily predictable took place in Romania: instauration of Communism. According to various official accounts of the Romanian Communist Party, both the political ascension and the numerical expansion of the Communist left party started once with the installation of the first government led by General Sanatescu on the 23rd of August 1944, the overthrow from power of Marshal Ion Antonescu and the turn of arms against Germany of Hitler. A well-known leader, Corneliu Manescu, confirms the following about communism before that moment: „Before World War II, the Communist Party represented a possibility to oppose the anti-democracy represented by Nazism”. A force should have been opposed by a similar force.

The political spectrum of the 1940s comprised a few parties, of which some had already been governing the country. The most powerful from an ideological and functional point of view were the following:

- The National Peasants' Party - political force set up in 1926, from the fusion of the old Peasants' Party with the National Party of Transylvania. The role played by these two parties before and especially after the Great Union

facilitated a good penetrability especially in the rural areas, among the population occupied with agriculture and traditional crafts, and also among the people in the higher social classes but whose interests were closely related to the traditional Romanian village. The initiative of the National Peasants' Party aimed the control of the village population over the production means, and as for the local administration, they wanted a greater autonomy from the central units which were obviously in the Capital or in the urban environment.

- The National Liberal Party, a true historical party of the Romanians, with roots in the previous century. It had played a very important role during World War I and afterwards, it had promoted the agricultural reform by which many poor peasants, former front fighters, gained practically a way of living for them and their families. See other data on the National Liberal Party.
- The Social Democratic Party of the Romanian Labourers seemed to be at that moment the most important representative of the left wing. Set up in 1893 as a party addressing to the industry workers, it remained for a long time an insignificant party due to Romania's weak development in that area. It somehow revived after 1910 and it gained some publicity starting with 1916, when part of its members faced some repressive forms due to the antiwar position adopted during World War I. Unfortunately, conflicts were often met inside it, there were not any general stable guidelines, and the opponents fully profited by these fratricide fights. The inconsistency and the lack of maturity and political strength cost them enormously, and the country in general. At the end of World War I they had already divided in two opposite wings:
 - the maximalists or the "Holy Secret" – who supported insistently the affiliation to the Third International (in fact the Comintern) and
 - the minimalists – following some moderate guidelines, slightly nationalist.(Buranovski, 2011, 32-33)

The maximalists knew an important success in May 1921. At that moment, most of the delegates present at a Congress voted for the affiliation to Comintern, fact which made the minimalist wing withdraw. Remained without any internal opposition, the leaders proposed and obtained inclusively the name change into the Socialist Communist Party of Romania, and afterwards into the Romanian Communist Party. The talks concerning the adhesion to the Third International took place in Moscow and Harkov. Constantin Popovici, member of the respective

delegation climbed afterwards up to the top of the Party, while others (Dobrogeanu-Gherea; Rozvan & Fluieras) were removed in time. They counted only in the subsequent propagandistic presentations, being presented as predecessors of the radical and militant “progressives”. Of the old party structure only the Socialist Democratic Party remained, which was to be absorbed later on.

The Romanian Communist Party had been operating illegally ever since the 11th of April 1921, due to its anti-national and anti-state position (it supported, among others, “to give back” Bessarabia to the USSR, Transylvania to Hungary and part of Dobrogea to Bulgaria). The event did not remain without consequences. The breakdown was inevitable, and part of its members or sympathizers left the party. Among those who remained, there were outlined two directions:

- the first, very close to Comintern, led by Marcel and Ana Pauker and comprising especially ethnic minorities, subsequently named “the Muscovites”, and
- the second, more nationalist, with greater success to the working classes in the big cities, later led by Gheorghe-Gheorghiu-Dej, former organizer of the strikes at Grivita Workshops. It was only in 1940 that the two formations came nearer formally, obviously not out of solidarity but due to conjuncture interests.

The Iron Guard represented the exponent of the right radical-nationalist movement of Romania. Its message was different from the others through the emphasis met on religiosity, sometimes led to extreme, on the morality lacking from the Romanian political environments, on the pure nationalism, led to sacrifice. That was the explanation for the great adherence among the educated young persons, among the intellectuals and among the students and the Orthodox clerics.

In conclusion, as we look at the Romanian political spectrum we identify, at present just as it was at that moment, only two personalities who could take over the power in not very favourable times: Iuliu Maniu – uncontested leader of the National Peasants’ Party, uncontested artisan of the Great Union, and Marshal Ion Antonescu – the strong hand tolerated by King Carol II despite the open conflict between them. Both Germanophiles, they had reached a compromise just because of the delicate geostrategic situation. The Reich wanted Romania to be governed by a person capable to keep the balance and to counterattack all the political and military moves. Of course, the general did not enjoy at all the sympathy of Communists or other political forces, exponents of democracy – especially those

who inclined towards the Anglophiles. In that context it had been sealed the only possible alliance: the one with the Legionary Movement. On the 14th of September, Romania became officially a national-legionary State, the government being shared by Marshal Ion Antonescu – head of the Government, and Horia Sima – as a representative of the only political party legally acknowledged at the respective date. Unfortunately, that alliance did not last for too long and it resulted in the separation of the Romanian politics into two great directions, one clearly Germanophile and the other one Anglophile. Maniu and Bratianu were strongly convinced that the agreement would not last for too long.

3. Offensive for Power. The Sanatescu and Radescu Governments

In that fatidic day, on the 23rd of August 1944, both Marshal Antonescu and a part of the Government members received the finishing blow. The 45-minute hearing of Antonescu at King Mihai ended brutally, with the Marshal, his companions and confident persons being arrested. The leaders of the political parties could not be found. In exchange, Lucretiu Patrascanu came very well prepared. He came together with Emil Bodnaras, presented to the King as “engineer Ceausu” – leader of the Patriotic Forces. These ones took the marshal away. In the pocket of the Communist leader’s coat it was the note already written with the text of the Proclamation to be read on the Radio by King Mihai and to announce the ending of the relations with the Axis and the turn of the arms against the Nazi Germany, where it was stipulated that “Romania accepted the armistice offered by the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America”. Unfortunately, that armistice did not exist yet, although it was supposed that it would be closed very soon. That very important document was to be signed only in September 1944.

In reality, “the Romanian delegation, prince Stirbei, C. Visioanu, Lucretiu Patrascanu, Gheorghe Pop, D. Damaceanu, arrived at Moscow on the 4th of September, but it was received by Molotov only on the 10th of September, when the text of the Armistice Agreement had already been drafted, and the Red Army controlled the whole country. It was not accepted any Romanian suggestion, the articles presented to the delegation being very different from the ones formulated at Cairo several months in advance. In the conditions of total Anglo-American neutrality, the Russians withdrew the promise of an unoccupied area, passed to the Romanian Government the duty to support the occupation army and imposed war compensations amounting to 300 million dollars, to be paid in six years. The

Romanians asked to be included an article stipulating the country evacuation at the end of the war, but Molotov opposed this request, and the American ambassador, A. Harriman, advised the delegation not to insist as it was inherent that the Soviet forces would leave Romania when the war ended. Neither was it accepted the request to be recognized to Romania the status of cobelligerent country, although it was stipulated the participation to war with 12 Romanian divisions, a number which in practice rose to 20.”(Georgescu, 1995, p. 246)

Siegfried Kogelfranz remarked: „At no time, by a single event, were so many soldiers and so many territories lost (as Germany lost) as a consequence of the radical changes in orientation of King Mihai.”(Constantiniu, 1999, p. 412)

As expected, the propagandistic machinery operated by the people of Moscow claimed totally the content of the Proclamation. Afterwards, in a Declaration, the Romanian Communist Party assumed the strategy which it claimed it had elaborated at the beginning of the decade and through which it had established distinctively objectives such as:

- to get Romania out of the Axis;
- to conclude immediately an armistice with the anti-Hitler coalition;
- to clean the national territory of the German armies;
- to set up a democratic political regime. (Frunză, p. 127)

Through the operative directive no. 1 of the General Headquarters of the Romanian Army, there were established the missions to be fulfilled by the army against the German troops. Thus, the First Romanian Army received the order to occupy fighting positions in the Transylvanian Plateau and in the area of the West and South-West border of Romania. In parallel, there were carried out a few sabotage actions and attacks against various objectives and central or local commandments of the German military units, in Bucharest and then in other areas of the country. Taking advantage of a situation proving to be very favourable, the Communists associated with the groups that determined the fall of Antonescu government, thus ensuring for the future a different position from which to negotiate. The Soviet support proved to be very important at that moment, as the Soviet activists who had infiltrated in Romania led a very intense activity to gain over very large population segments.

Moreover, the military blow on the 23rd of August gave the possibility to the Soviet Army to occupy key positions on the territory of Romania and to introduce

new disturbance elements among the Communist Party, to promote by various means its own people in very important positions and in the Romanian Communist Party, and subsequently in the public and political life of Romania. From the attitude adopted by the allies, the Romanian politicians realized that it was necessary, in case of such an armistice, which was supposed to be closed on the 26th of August, to obtain the goodwill of the Soviets and, with all the indispositions, to make a coalition with the Romanian Communist Party in the National Democratic Block comprising: the National Peasants' Party, the National Liberal Party, the Socialist Democratic Party, the Romanian Communist Party (June 20th, 1944).

In their turn, the Communists, obedient to their Muscovite leader, launched appeals to antifascist unity. The self-dissolution of Comintern on the 10th of June 1943 did not mean a true independence for the Communists, but it gave a greater freedom of movement to the internal, national wing of the party. At that time, at the top of the party it was a triumvirate made of Emil Bodnarus, Constantin Parvulescu și Iosif Ranghet, closely seconded by Lucretiu Patrascanu, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej and Teohari Georgescu. After the alliance concluded with the democratic parties, the Romanian Communist Party mentions scrupulously: *“The politics of national-patriotic block did not and does not steal its organizational, ideological and political independence, keeping its full freedom in solving the basic problems of present and future Romania”* (Onișoru, 1996)

A significant role was played by division “Tudor Vladimirescu”, comprising especially former Romanian prisoners in the Soviet army and organized by Ana Pauker, as well as Division “Horea, Closca and Crisan”. Next to the military training of those soldiers, former prisoners of the Soviets, its members were also trained politically. By various moves, sometimes by force, the members of the said units were trained to become the spearhead for the occupation of Romania, not only militarily but also politically. Their activity had started even before the 23rd of August 1944, when they acted as partisan troops in the area of Moldavia. On the 30th of August 1944, the Soviet troops entered Bucharest, thus acknowledging the end of a stage in the plan to occupy Romania.

We shall try to have a perspective look upon the events which facilitated the truly fulminatory ascension of an obscure, quasi-unknown party, with some hundreds members in 1944, to govern a state which, before the world war was considered to

be a strong, respected, stable state, very flourishing from an economic and cultural point of view.

The first political statements on the 23rd and the 24th of August 1944, the establishment of a representative and working government led by General Sanatescu, the partial enforcement of the Constitution of 1923, all relying upon the hope in the support of the new Western allies, placed us on the reconstruction line of the inter-war democratic system. (Agrigoroaei & Todreascu, 1996, p. 332)

In fact, all the hopes for the better of Romanians fell one by one in front of the plunder and disorder that the “liberating” Red Army promoted assiduously. At the respective moment, the political class proved so much naivety and clumsiness that nowadays, after almost 70 years, we still cannot understand it. It was already obvious that Romania’s admission to the anti-Hitler war had been motivated by a very strict calculation. The area itself had to close the front as much as possible on the line of the Carpathians and the Danube, and in no case it had in view the conservation of democracy. Subsequently it will be seen, yet too late, that the Western leaders did not do almost anything for the new allies, leaving them totally to the disposal of the Russians.

On the 31st of August 1944, through the Royal Decree no. 1628, there were put into force again the provisions of the Constitution of 1923 concerning the citizens’ rights and the exercise of powers in state. The same normative document stipulated the authorization of the Council of Ministers to organize a group of national representation, in order to set up a new government. Under the “protective” umbrella of the Soviet Army, the communist disturbance elements carried out propaganda actions in the environments of the Romanian workers and peasants. At the same time, the left forces regrouped and there were established all the details in view of the political offensive for taking over the power.

On the 5th of September 1944, it was decided within a common meeting of the delegates of the Romanian Communist Party and the Union of Socialist Youths to establish the Singular Labour Front, and on the 26th of September it was published the Draft Platform of the National Democratic Front, which became an ideological program on the 2nd of October. The National Democratic Front comprised the representatives of the Romanian Communist Party, the Socialist Democratic Party, the United Syndicates, the Union of Patriots and the Front of Ploughmen. The old parties, the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants’ Party refused to adhere to this movement.

Consequently, on the 16th of October, the representatives of the Singular Labour Front, Lucretiu Patrascanu (Romanian Communist Party) and Constantin Titel Petrescu (Socialist Democratic Party) resigned from Sanatescu government. The leader of the Romanian delegation was Lucretiu Patrascanu. This one, in a meeting with A.I. Visinski, stated the need to cooperate with the historical forces, in order to have the necessary levers to mobilize the “people’s forces” against Nazi Germany and to ensure a “peaceful” cooperation with the USSR. At that moment, in Moscow there were present illegal Romanian communist refugees who were ready to take over the power. Among them, Ana Pauker, Luca Laszlo (Vasile Luca), and others. At present it is known that a great part of the Communist members were “specialized” more than politically in the USSR: Ana Pauker, Gheorghe Pintilie, Vasile Luca, Gheorghe Mazuru, Alexandru Nicolski, Boris Chisinevski, Emil Bodnaras. Representative is the case of the last character: in 1931, Lieutenant Emil Bodnaras, chief of the Information Service of Regiment 12 artillery Sadagura, passed in the USSR. There he adhered to the Communist ideology and at Astrahan he graduated from a spy school. He returned to Romania in 1934 with certain missions. He was caught in Ploiest Rail Station and the War Council summoned him to 10 years in prison. During detention (Doftana, Aiud, Brasov, Galati), he met Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej with whom he made friends.

Their friendship will be of good omen because, just as we will see later, Bodnaras climbed by himself and for a long time the steps up to the top of the Communist hierarchy/oligarchy both under Dej and when Nicolae Ceausescu was steering the party. As a matter of fact, they had known each other very well ever since year 1936 when most of the Communists were gathered in Doftana prison. In there, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej imposed himself as a leader, who represented the best the party’s requirements from the point of view of his origins, as he came from a working environment. Both he and his father were workers. He remarked himself at the strike on the 2nd of February 1933 at Grivita Workshops, in Bucharest.

At Doftana, he had next to him the following: Nicolae Ceausescu, Gheorghe Apostol, Alexandru Draghici, Alexandru Moghioros, and the Soviet agents Serghei Nikonov, Pintilie Bondarenko, Petea Goncearuk. Dej stroke a false note among the other Communist leaders who existed up to that moment as he had not attended any Muscovite training. We have mentioned in here the evolution of some future leaders as later on it will be eloquent in understanding the crystallization of the Communist power poles.

Returning to the moment 1944, we know nowadays that although Patrascanu had adopted a more moderate line with the aim of gaining experience, making propaganda and penetrating slowly into the power circles at Moscow, the directives were very clear: “any idea of collaboration should be excluded”. From then on, Maniu and the democratic parties had to be attacked by the communist propaganda, treated as “fascist” (Constantiniu and Ioan Chiper – *The Communist Party does not intend to take over the power in Romania, in the Archives of Totalitarianism*, no. 2/1995, 8).

It was clear that Patrascanu had analyzed, together with other fellows, the real situation of Romania at that moment and that he guessed that a too fierce action could damage their real interests. The instrument had already been created through the National Democratic Block, formation which had gathered all the parties and groups, bigger or smaller, with which they could cooperate, which could have been absorbed or over which they could have had a greater influence.

However, the Soviet directives were very different. Even more that the Soviet Union had, according to the agreements with the other Allied Powers, full control over Romania. The Romanian Communist Party could not lose this very favourable moment, all the more as it was the weakest Communist Party in the sphere of influence of the USSR. The presence of the “liberating” Red Army was thus essential. On the 5th of September 1944, it was decided within a common meeting of the delegates of the Romanian Communist Party and the Union of Socialist Youths to establish the Singular Labour Front, and on the 26th of September it was published the Draft Platform of the National Democratic Front, which became an ideological program on the 2nd of October. The National Democratic Front comprised the representatives of the Romanian Communist Party, the Socialist Democratic Party, the United Syndicates, the Union of Patriots and the Front of Ploughmen. The claims of the National Democratic Front were headed towards several directions:

1. The war effort: to liquidate the remaining German and Hungarian pro fascist armies, to punish those guilty of the country’s disastrous condition, to cancel the previous dictatorial legislations;
2. Democratic reforms: equality of all citizens in front of laws, without any difference based on nationality, religion or gender, freedom of the press, freedom of expression, freedom of meetings and the right to organizations etc.;

3. Social and economic claims.
4. Agricultural reform through the expropriation of large 50 hectare surfaces and the allotment of peasants without land or with small land areas, obtaining the agricultural inventory for them from the state funds or from the great land owners, the cancellation of peasant debts to the Romanian state or to various banks, ensuring a decent living style and human working conditions for labourers, civil servants, scholars, establishing a minimum wage compared to the increases in prices, protection of women and children, decent working conditions and a corresponding wage for agricultural workers, cheap credits for distressed persons in need in order to rebuild their houses, freedom of trade and crafts, benefits for disabled, widows and war orphans – by granting them pensions, nationalization of the National Bank and of the 18 great banks and control over all Cartels and nationalization of those in the basic industry. (*Scanteia*, no. 6/26 September 1944).

Except for the last two claims, all the other ones opened the possibility to any political party to adhere to the National Democratic Front. However, this was only a “Trojan horse”. On the one hand, because it was obvious that the National Peasants’ Party and the National Liberal Party would not adhere, on the one hand just because of some claims comprised in the program, and on the other hand because of the intention to debark quickly the military government of general Sanatescu, government which had the role to maintain the order and the good functioning of the legal state. The old parties, the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants’ Party obviously refused to adhere to this movement. Consequently, on the 16th of October, the representatives of the Singular Labour Front, Lucretiu Patrascanu (the Romanian Communist Party) and C-tin Titel Petrescu (the Social Democratic Party) resigned from Sanatescu government, just as Titel Petrescu did on the 18th of October. (Georgescu, 1995, p. 249)

The position of the left parties strengthened even more once with the entrance in the second government led by general Sanatescu of no more than 10 representatives of the Singular Labour Front. These were: Doctor Petru Groza, as vice-president, Lucretiu Patrascanu – Department of Justice, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej – Department of Communications, Stefan Voitec – Department of National Education, Lotar Radaceanu – Department of Labour, Gheorghe Nicolau – Department of Social Welfare, Teohari Georgescu – Undersecretary at the Ministry

of Interior, Romulus Zaroni – Undersecretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Domains, Tudor Ionescu – Undersecretary at the Ministry of National Economy. By these appointments, the Singular Labour Front obtained practically half of the government seats, strengthening its position and thus being able to prepare for taking over the power. They did not succeed in obtaining, although they wanted it intensely, the Ministry of Interior. This would have ensured almost a complete control over administration, and thus control and influence over the whole country.

The second Sanatescu government did not last for too long either. The Communist Party, manipulated by orders from Moscow, contributed essentially to the dissolution of that governmental formula, asking on the 6th of December 1944 that the Ministry of War should be given to general Vasiliu-Rascaru, allied of the communists. Moreover, the historical parties criticized toughly and fiercely the government, both due to its concessions made to the communists and due to some issues related to the Romanian administration in North Transylvania and the accusations accepted by the Romanian authorities that the conditions of the Armistice Agreement were not met. The dissolution of government Sanatescu II was also hastened by the ministers from the historical parties who, on the 2nd of December, resigned unsatisfied by the attitudes and probably by the lack of professionalism of many people in the National Democratic Front. A new government was established, led by another military person, General Nicolae Radescu. In this new governmental configuration, the National Democratic Front maintained all its previously held positions, which did not make easy at all the mission of Prime Minister Radescu.

„On the 31st of December 1945, Visinski arrives at Bucharest, accompanied by the ambassadors of the United States and England at Moscow, appointed during the meeting which had taken place in Moscow to put into practice the decisions made there, namely

- the Groza government should accept two ministers from the opposition, who could take part in the governing process through a loyal cooperation;
- to reestablish the freedom of the press and the freedom of public meetings;
- to organize free elections.

After several discussions, it was reached an agreement concerning the personalities who should complete the government: Emil Hateganu from the National Peasants' Party (Maniu) and Mihai Romniceanu from the Liberal Party (Dinu Maniu) (Chirnoagă, 1997, p. 257)

Moreover, in the period January-February, the left parties organized huge anti-governmental protests, which led to the resignation of General Nicolae Radescu, on the 28th of February. Those manifestations were directed from Moscow, in order to destabilize the country, to singe general Radescu's reputation and to favour either the accession to power of the National Democratic Front or to justify a quick and efficient intervention of the Red Army in Romania. The former Prime Minister took refuge at the diplomatic mission of Great Britain from where he did not enter again on the territory of Romania but he settled in the U.S.A. There he tried, without any success, to coagulate the Romanian anti-communist forces from America. He was helped by personalities of the Romanian exile, such as Mihail Farcasanu (Romanian jurist, politician and writer, established in the U.S.A.), Grigore Gafencu (diplomat, politician and journalist, established at Geneva, and subsequently at Paris and New York) or Constantin Visoianu (politician, journalist, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania). Unfortunately, the interests of the Great Powers were more important, and the compromises made to the Soviet Union showed soon their results. (Leu, 2010, pp. 20-44)

Another attempt to reestablish a real representativeness of Romanians and to create a new government, this time in exile, took place immediately after the 23rd of August 1944, at Vienna. Practically, Horia Sima, the last great leader of the Legionary Movement, was released from the camp of Sachsenhausen and taken quickly (on the 24th of August) to the General Headquarters of the Fuhrer, where he had direct meetings with Himmler and Ribbentrop. There and at that moment it was decided that the war was to continue with Romania on Germany's side, and Horia Sima to be the one to coagulate around him all the elements willing to support such a plan. Three months later, a so-called national government was established in exile, which comprised five members of the Legionary Movement (Horia Sima, V. Iasinschi, M. Sturdza, C. Georgescu and Gr. Maniolescu) and three independents (professor Sangeorgiu, general Chirnoaga and a representative of Bessarabia, Vladimir Cristi). (Chirnoaga, 1997, pp. 250-251)

However, this "government", although supported by Germany through logistics, the arming of two infantry divisions and a tank battalion, trained and even aligned on a front segment, did not succeed in gathering the support in order to initiate a decisive offensive. The personalities in exile got involved only sporadically. The only noticeable achievements were with respect to the assistance given to the

prisoners of Romanian origin, who were in the German camps and did not have any other support. (Chirnoaga, 1997, pp. 251-252)

4. Conclusions

The rise of the Romanian Communist Party to the high spheres of political powers was greatly due to the betrayal of the former allies. Immediately after the 23rd of August 1944, through clever moves, blackmail and threats, an obscure political party, with only some hundreds members and sympathizers, supported politically and strategically by the Soviet representatives, took over the rule of the Romanian state, overthrew the authentic constitutional democracy and imposed the Soviet model. Ideologically, Communism and Christianity reject each other. The stages in taking over the power alternated quickly, passing easily from illegality to effective rule and total control over the country. The other political forces were practically beat down and then dissolved. The Parliamentary elections were forged without any reaction from the Great Powers, the constitutional monarchy was abolished and Romania became a People's Republic under the direct influence of Moscow. The communist leaders strengthened their position skillfully.

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