Fighting Communism in the Romanian Mountains: History and Memory of the Făgăraș Armed Movement, 1950-1956

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for the academic environment at CEU, which enabled me to complete a research that I started some years ago. I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Constantin Iordachi, who encouraged me to work on this topic and who helped me shape its approach. All consultations that I had during the past academic year at CEU and at the OSA Archivum brought me a step closer to my final argument. Besides my CEU mentors, I am thankful for the friendship and warm support of Professors Elena and Octavian Gabor.

The interviews cited in the following pages were not mere exchanges of information, but life experiences at the end of which both my interviewees and I were different.

I dedicate this thesis to my grandparents, Eugenia and Gheorghe Hașu, who were with me in this process filled with challenges and joys.

ABSTRACT

Active between 1950 and 1956, the Făgăraș Group is one of the most important and controversial movements of armed anti-communist resistance in Romania. Demonized by the communist propaganda, which called the partisans "bandits" and "terrorists," the group was discussed from opposite perspectives after 1989. In historiographical works, media debates, fiction and documentary films, the partisans in the mountains are sometimes depicted as heroes, sometimes as extremists. I argue that the two trends of the post-communist discourses follow the ideological dichotomy of the Cold War. This thesis proposes a new historiographical approach based on a critical reading of a variety of sources, which transcendes the bynary system with heroes and villains. By bringing in overlooked actors and rejecting the black-and-white framework of interpretation, I suggest a mutifacetted view of the fenomenon, based on archival documents, memoirs, and oral history interviews.

The archives of the communist secret police and of the Radio Free Europe are ethnographicaly read with the purpose of revealing their gaps and pitfalls. Based on them, the propaganda and counter-propaganda about armed resistance were built. They influenced each other and clashed over time. This thesis explores the long-term effect of the files and gives voice to crucial actors of armed resistance overlooked by both archival systems. The memory and the unexplored "postmemory" of the movement show the perspectives of survivors and their descendats and reveal the trauma of the communist repression.

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INTRODUCTION
Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Romania. Why to discuss it again?

In the post-1989 public sphere, two antagonistic discourses about the Romanian armed anti-communist resistance can be identified. Media accounts, movies, historiographical works, and public debates present the members of the so-called resistance in the mountains either as heroes or as criminals. Based on different professional ethics, their discourses fit by large into a black-and-white framework of interpretation: some support the positive portrayal of armed resistance, others the negative image. I argue that these opposite discourses have their roots in the ideological dichotomy of the Cold War, when primary accounts about the phenomenon of armed resistance were produced and disseminated. In order to expose the biases of the post-communist discourses, I will go back to the archival systems of the 1950s and study the gaps, inconsistencies, and pitfalls of the Romanian political police files and of the CIA financed Radio Free Europe archive. The information from these archival documents, which allegedly recorded the history of the movement from opposite sides of the Iron Curtain, will be completed with other sources on the topic. Written memoirs and oral history interviews give voice to actors of the resistance overlooked by the archives and silenced in the public sphere both before and after the fall of the regime. The goal of this research is to propose a new historiographical approach, based on a critical reading of different kinds of sources, which offer a rounded view on the phenomenon.

The focus of this thesis is the history and the memory of one of the best known and most contentious armed movements: the group that fought on the northern slope of the

Făgăraș Mountains, in the early-to-late 1950s.[1] Active in central Romania, the self-called "Grupul Carpatin Făgărășan " [Făgăraș Carpathian Group] was one of the longest lasting groups of resistance against the regime.[2] Political police reports from February 1952 note that the "terrorists" from the Făgăraș County took the first place in the "top three" most wanted "gangs" in the country.[3] In the Romanian post-communist society, the same group became subject of movies, media reports, and public debates, being used and abused in accordance with various agendas. However, the growing attention did not translate into an abundance of works on the topic.[4]

[1] This thesis discusses the history of the group between 1950 and 1956. Different accounts propose two different dates for the moment when the partisans fled into the mountains: the 1st of May 1949 and the 1st of May 1950. In his memoirs published after 1990, the leader of the group, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, indicated the year 1949. However, during the Securitate interrogations in the mid 1950s, members of the group stated that they fled into the mountains in 1950. See the Archive of the Național Council for the Study of the Securitate Files (from now on CNSAS Archive) Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 3, p. 39. All archival material points to 1950. This mismatch can be a memory hoax of Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, since he tried to remember facts that had happened half a century before the moment of telling them. The Făgăraș Group was active until July-August 1955, when five of the last seven partisans were arrested, as a result of treason. Another one was caught in May 1956. Sentenced to death, the arrested were executed in 1957/1958.Two members of the group survived, but only one escaped arrest: Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu. A controversial and charismatic figure, researcher and prolific writer after 1989, he is the most known leader of the group and probably the most wanted partisan in the communist Romania. Ogoranu went into hiding in 1948 and was arrested in 1976. Ogoranu's life during the 28 years of hiding, the political police's actions against him, and the post-communist debates surrounding his image could make alone a topic of research. However, it does not serve the argument of this thesis.

[2] The members of the Făgăraș Group used to sign different messages under the name Grupul Carpatin Făgărașean. However, it is not the only term they used; according to the political police files, sometimes they used other names, such as Păunașii Codrilor [The Forests' Peacocks], Rezistența Națională [Național Resistance], Partizanii libertății [The Partisans of Freedom]. They did this to define themselves, but also to let the impression that there were many other groups in the mountains (which was not true). Notes signed under these names can be found in the CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, pp. 379-382.

[3] See, CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 10, p. 280.

[4] The first history of the Făgăraș Group was written after 1989 by Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu in a series of four volumes called *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc* [*Pine Trees Break, But They Do Not Bend*]; his memoirs are discussed in the fourth chapter of this paper. Another volume dedicated to the group was published in 2007 by The National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism in Romania and offers excerpts from the Securitate Archives. See Adrian Brișca and Radu Ciuceanu, *Rezistența Armată din Muntii Făgăraș. Gruparea Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu. 1949-1955* [*Armed Resistance in the Făgăraș Mountains. Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu Group. 1949-1955*] (București: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2007). Scholarly works on the topic were authored by Dorin Dobrincu: see Dorin Dobrincu, "Historicizing a Disputed Theme: Anti-Communist Armed Resistance in Romania" in *Stalinism Revisited: The Establishment of Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (Budapest-New-York: CEU Press, 2009), Dorin Dobrincu, "Începuturile rezistenței armate anticomuniste în Romania" ["The Beginning of Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Romania"] *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie*, A. D. Xenopol, vol 34 (Iași, 1997). Historians Dennis Deletant, Marius Oprea, Liviu Pleșa, Cosmin Budeancă, Romulus Rusan mentioned the Făgăraș Group in works dedicated to the armed anti-communist phenomenon. See Florica Dobre et ali (eds.), *Bande, bandiți și eroi. Grupurile de rezistență și Securitatea (1948-1968)*, [*Bands, Bandits, and Heroes. The Groups of Resistance and the Securitate*] (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003), Gheorghe Onișoru ed, *Mișcarea armată de rezistență anticomunistă din Romania, 1944-1962 [The Național Armed Anti-Communist Movement in Romania]*

The Făgăraș Group is part of the larger phenomenon of the *resistance in the mountains*. It consisted of small teams of people who hid in the mountains and carried on a "guerilla fight" against the regime.[5] Due to political censorship, writers had little information about the topic before 1989.[6] Public interest in this theme increased after the fall of communism, with the publication of former political convicts' memoirs and declassification of most of the political police files.[7] Although the majority of researchers seem to agree that the

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(București: Editura Kullusys, 2003), Romulus Rusan (ed.), *Dennis Deletant la Sighet* [*Dennis Deletant at Sighet*] (București: Fundația Academia Civică, 2014). See also Cosmin Budeancă, Florentin Olteanu, Iulia Pop (eds.), *Rezistența anticomunistă - cercetare științifică și valorificare muzeală* [*Anti-Communist Resistance – Scientific Research and Muzeal Usage*], (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2006), Cicerone Ioniţoiu, *Rezistența armată anticomunistă din Munții României, 1946-1958* [Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in the Romanian Mountains], (Bucharest: Editura Gândirea Românească, 1993). Names of the people who fought in the mountains are listed in the memoirs of Stanciu Stroia, a physician from Făgăraș who spent seven years in political prisons. See Stanciu Stroia (author) and Dan Dusleag (contributor), *My Second University: Memories from Romanian Communist Prisons* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 1995). The history of the Făgăraș Group is also revisited by Karl-Heintz Brenndorfer, who based his book on Ogoranu's memoirs and presented the partisans as heroes. See Karl-Heinz Brenndorfer, *Bandiți, spioni sau eroi? Rezistența armată anticomunistă în Romania 1948-1962* [*Bandits, Spies, or Heroes? Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Romania*] (Stuttgart: Manfred Schnek, Offsetdruck, Reutlingen, 2012). Victor Ioan Pică, Victor Roşca, Alexandru Salcă, and Teofil Mija, all former political prisoners from the Făgăraș County, wrote their own testimonies on the topic and looked at the movement as a fight for freedom and self-sacrifice. See Victor Ioan Pică, *Libertatea are chipul lui Dumnezeu (Lupta anticomunistă din Țara Făgărașului)* [*Freedom Has the Image of God (Anti-Communist Fight in the Făgăraș County)*], (Târgu Mureș: Editura Arhipelag, 1993), Victor Roșca, *Moara lui Kalusek. Începutul represiunii comuniste* [*Kalusek's Mill. The Beginning of the Communist Repression*], (București: Curtea Veche, 2007), Teofil Mija, *Generația neînfrântă [Unbridled Generation]* (Brașov, 2008), Ioan Eșan, *Vulturii Carpaților. Rezistența armată anticomunistă din Munții Făgăraș, 1948-1958* [*Carpathian Eagles. Armed Anti-communist Resistance in the Făgăraș Mountains*], (Făgăraș: RAR, 1997), Constantin Vasilescu, *Rezistența Armată Anticomunistă [Armed Anti-Communist Resistance]*, (București: Predania, 2013).

[5] Citing works about military strategy, historian Dorin Dobrincu defines the "guerilla war" as "a 'small war' or 'irregular war' waged by unprofessional civil-soldiers, who transform into fighters when their country is invaded by a foreign power." See Dorin Dobrincu, "Historicizing a Disputed Theme," pp. 305-307.

[6] Dorin Dobrincu notes that the Romanian political analyst Ghiță Ionescu vaguely mentioned the phenomenon of armed resistance in 1964, placing the term "between inverted commas." See Dorin Dobrincu, "Historicizing a Disputed Theme," pp. 307-309. Another early account of the Romanian armed resistance before 1989 was given by Traian Golea, who fled the country in 1949. In a book published in 1988, he points to the groups on the northern and the southern slope of Făgăraș Mountains. The inaccuracies of his work (wrong names and dates), reveal the lack of sources at the time. See Traian Golea, *Romania, Beyond the Limits of endurance: A Desperate Appeal to the Free World* (Miami Beach: Romanian Historical Studies, 1988), pp. 53-55. The lack of information was also reflected in historiographical accounts published after the fall of communism. The first "dictionary" of resistance has flaws in terms of accuracy of names, places, and dates. See Cicerone Ioniţoiu, *Cartea de Aur a rezistenței românești împotriva comunismului [The Golden Book of the Romanian Anti-communist Resistance]*, (București: Hrisovul, 1996).

[7] The major part of the political police files were opened in Romania in January 2000, with the foundation of The National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives [Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității, in short CNSAS]—a public institution under parliamentary control, based in Bucharest, Romania. Its mission is to manage, work with, and offer access to the political police archives. CNSAS researchers remarked that *Bibliografia istorică a Romaniei* [*The Historical Bibliography of Romania]* mentioned 268 titles with respect to anti-communist resistance; more than two thirds of them discuss the issue of armed resistance in the 1950s. See Liviu Țăranu and Theodor Bărbulescu (eds.), *Jurnale din rezistența anticomunistă. Vasile Motrescu, Mircea Dobre: 1952-1953*, (București: Nemira, 2006), p. 10.

movement started in 1944 and reached its peak at the beginning of the 1950s, the periodization is still under debate.[8] The exact number of armed groups cannot be established either. Nonetheless, some historians highlight fourteen zones of resistance active in the Romanian mountains.[9] The leader of the group who fought on the northern slope of the Făgăraș Mountains, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, cited in his memoirs a political police internal report that pointed out to "1300 terrorist bands in the country."[10] In a similar note, Dorin Dobrincu revealed a Securitate document issued in January 1949.[11] He reasoned that the political police claimed to have been annihilated 1196 "counter-revolutionary/subversive

[8] Dennis Deletant and other historians state that the phenomenon of armed resistance was active between 1945 and 1962. See Dennis Deletant, *Romania sub regimul comunist* [*Romania Under the Communist Yoke*] (București: Fundația Academia Civică, 2010), p 78; Ștefan Andreescu, "A Little Known Issue in the History of Romania: The Armed Anti-Communist Resistance ", in *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, vol. 33, no. 1-2, 1994, pp. 191-197. Florin Abraham talked about armed partisan groups between 1945 and 1960. See Florin Abraham, "Lupta anticomunistă şi memoria colectivă dupa 1989 în România" ["The Anti-Communist Fight and the Collective Memory in Romania After 1989"] in *Rezistența anticomunistă. Cercetare științifică și valorificare muzeală [Anti-Communist Resistance. Scientific Research and Muzeal Use]*, Cosmin Budeancă, Florentin Olteanu, Iulia Pop (eds.), (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2006), p. 282. Cicerone Ionițoiu proposed the period 1946-1958. See Cicerone Ionițoiu, *Cartea de Aur a rezistenței*. Other authors prolonged the phenomenon until mid or late 1960s. For instance, the historiographical periodization proposed by researchers at the Național Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives is 1948-1968. See *Bande, bandiți și eroi. Grupurile de rezistență și Securitatea* (1948-1968) [*Bands, Bandits, and Heroes. Groups of Resistance and the Securitate*], CNSAS (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003). Doru Radoslav, Liviu Bejenaru, and Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu claimed that the armed resistance was active between 1944 and 1962. See Doru Radoslav, "Rezistența anticomunistă armată din Romania, între istorie și memorie" ["Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Romania, Between History and Memory"] in *Comunism și represiune în România: istoria tematică a unui fratricid național [Communism and Repression in Romania: The Thematical History of a Național Fratricide]*, Ruxandra Cesereanu ed., (Iasi: Polirom, 2006) p 83; Liviu Bejenaru, "Să lupți pentru a muri: mișcarea de rezistență armată anticomunistă. O încercare de analiză" [To Fight for Dying: Armed Anti-Communist Resistance Movement. An Attempt of Analysis] in *Mișcarea armată de rezistență anticomunistă din Romania, 1944-1962 [Național Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Romania]*, ed. Gheorghe Onișoru, (București: Editura Kullusys, 2003), p. 376; Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc*, vol IV, (Făgăraș: Mesagerul de Făgăraș, 2004) p. 14. In 2007, Dorin Dobrincu summed up main historical accounts on the topic. See Dorin Dobrincu, "Historicizing a Disputed Theme," pp. 307-335 According to him, the armed resistance began in 1944 and lasted until 1961. This paper accepts Dobrincu's periodization, since it is supported by documents which show that the first groups of armed resistance formed right after Soviet troops entered Romania (i.e., 1944) and that "the last isolated partisan fugitive" was caught by the Securitate in 1961. Dorin Dobrincu also identified two stages of armed resistance. The former consists of the groups active between 1944, when the Soviet troops entered Romania, and 1947, when the fighters who opposed Russian invasion were annihilated. According to Dobrincu, the latter stage "which started in 1948 and lasted more than a decade, was marked by toughness of the armed confrontations and the ampleness of repression, as well as by the isolation of the partisan groups."

[9] See Dorin Dobrincu "Historicizing a Disputed Theme," p 317.

[10] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, p 5.

[11] Securitate [The Security] or Departamentul Securității Statului [Department of State Security]—was the political police during the communist regime in Romania. As a tool of the Communist Party, the Securitate was resposible for crimes and human rights violations commited between 1948, when the institution was founded, and December 1989, when the communist regime in Romania was overthrown.

organizations and groups" between 23 August 1944 and January 1949.[12] Both authors challenge the figures and doubt the Securitate's objectivity. It is likely that the political police exaggerated, underlining its merits in fighting the opponents. Fundația Luptătorii din Rezistența Armată Anticomunistă [Foundation of Fighters of the Armed Anti-communist Resistance] offers a more realistic number: two hundred active groups.[13] Besides historiographical works, the Final Report by Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania dedicated a chapter to the armed anti-communist resistance, noting that the topic was subject of mystifications, exaggerations, and demonization in post-communist society.[14]

By taking the Făgăraș Group as a case-study, this thesis explores a variety of sources in order to transcend the monolithic interpretations and the binary system with criminals and heroes. The questions addressed include: How were the opposite discourses about the Făgăraș Group produced, by whom and with what purpose? What are the gaps, biases, and pitfalls of the sources that shaped the history and memory of the Făgăraș Group? Who are the actual people behind the image constructed around them, and how do they see themselves?

This thesis unfolds in four parts, each revealing a different system of sources related to the Făgăraș movement. The first chapter explores the Securitate archive, produced through the lenses of the communist ideological truth, with the aim of demonizing the partisans. The reports of high-rank Securitate officers and the depositions of prosecutors during the trials reflect the working practices of the political police. The information in the files was later musealized and used for training purposes, while consolidating the communist propaganda. For instance, photographs of the partisans archived in the political files of the 1950s, became

[12] Dorin Dobrincu, "Historicizing a Disputed Theme", p 334.
[13] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng,* vol IV, p 3.
[14] In 2006, based on The Final Report of the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, the President of the country condemned the communist regime as "illegitimate and criminal." See Vladimir Tismăneanu, Dorin Dobrincu, and Cristian Vasile (eds.), *Raport final*, [*Final Report*], (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007), p. 320.

pedagogical material in an internal museum of the Securitate.[15] The files mirror the internal dialogue of the regime, which was reflected then in public discourses, through different means.

The goal of the first chapter is to explore the methods through which the first accounts about the movement were produced and to challenge the content of the files by revealing their gaps, silences, and errors. Following Katherine Verdery's methodology of exploring the files as "ethnographical objects," this chapter reveals the working process behind the political apparatus and the viewpoint through which reality was perceived and recorded during communism.[16] In this framework, the files are not taken as repositories of truth, for they form a "site of knowledge production."[17] The working premise is that only by understanding how the archive was produced, can one critically read it and ponder its long-term effect.

The second section explores the image of resistance on the other side of the Iron Curtain, during the time when the partisans were still in the mountains. It refers to the Western counter-propaganda created to fight the communist "truth" and to praise the partisans, who were demonized by the communist discourse. The archival support of this discourse is the Radio Free Europe (RFE) archive, managed by the OSA Archivum in Budapest.[18] Although the RFE and the Securitate used different methods to construct their discourses, the political apparatus behind them overlooked facts that could have nuanced the ideological truth promoted. The propaganda and counter-propaganda clashed during the Cold

[15] The information was obtained in October-November 2014 during personal discussions with Prof. Constatin Iordachi, who visited the Securitate internal museum based in Bucharest (Băneasa). The archival material was displayed and used during the training of new political police officers.

[16] Katherine Verdery ethnographically explores the Securitate archive in a volume dedicated to her own political files. See Katherine Verdery, *Secrets and Truths: Ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police* (Budapest-New-York: Central European University Press, 2014).

[17] Ibid.

[18] OSA Archives in Budapest offers an extensive amount of materials related to the Romanian anti-communist resistance. The most relevant fonds are: Archival Catalog - Communism and Cold War/Romanian Unit (HU OSA 300 60C), Digital Repository - Information Items/Romania (HU OSA 300-1-2), and Digital Repository-RFE/RL Background Report/Romania (HU OSA 300-1-2). For news from behind the Iron Curtain and weekly information letters, I studied: HU OSA 300-8-52 and HU OSA 300-8-24 . Other relevant materials which were not digitized can be found in specific containers.

War and fought over the same audience, influencing the way people perceived reality. By proposing two opposite images of resistance, the Securitate and RFE eliminated shades of reality and set the first black-and-white framework of interpretation. Through different means, both the CIA financed radio and the Soviet-style secret police reclaimed people on their sides. The partisans were presented either as criminals or as heroes and the Romanian citizens were pressed to take one of the two stands: for or against. This is not to say, however, that the discourses were similar.

Neither the Securitate nor the Radio Free Europe archives are unspoiled systems, but are rather collections curated by archivists after the fall of communism. The files studied in this thesis were created during the 1950s, but they were reorganized and re-archived after 1989. Dossiers initially archived by political police officers or by RFE staff became part of various public or private post-socialist archival institutions. In this process, some files were renamed, lost, destroyed or classified. The archival process and the policies of the institutions that manage the archives influence the way we read the materials. Thus, an Archive (as an institution) is a political statement and the archival system is a space of power.[19]

After critically analyzing the two archival systems that reflect the ideological dichotomy of the Cold War, the third chapter brings in a category of actors overlooked by both the Securitate and Radio Free Europe: the supporters of the Făgăraș Group. The purpose of the section is to use oral history interviews in order to give voice to women who actively helped the partisans during the five years of resistance. Targeted by the Securitate, they were the link between the men in the mountains and their families and communities. Despite de fact that they were arrested, followed, and stigmatize, they do not have political files on their own names. Their interrogations randomly melt into the files of men whom they supported.

[19] The idea that Archive is a space of power was presented within a class discussion by Csaba Szilágyi (head of the Human Rights Program, OSA Archivum Budapest) during the course LEGS 5820 - Archives, Evidence and Human Rights. Following the class, I explored the topic in an interview with Szilagyi for another class project. I am grateful for his timely and generous explanations that helped me make good use of the RFE archive.

Consequently, they are neglected by both researchers and the public discourses, which focus on the men in the mountains only. I argue that women of the supporting network were crucial participants in the movement and their perspective should be taken into account. Their narratives with respect to their roles and motivations complete the history of the Făgăraș Group and show that it was a heterogeneous movement.

The last chapter of this thesis is dedicated to the memory of the Făgăraș Group and brings in new sources that offer a full view: written memoirs of the survivors and recollections of the partisans' descendants. The first part discusses the singular written memoirs of Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, the most charismatic and controversial member of the Făgăraș resistance. The last section of the chapter presents oral history interviews with the survivors of the Făgăraș Group and their families, exploring the "postmemory" of resistance.[20] The aim is twofold: to reveal the self-image of survivors of the Făgăraș Group which does not fit in the mainstream discourses and to analyze how the opposite labels forced upon them over the time through propaganda means shaped their identity.[21]

All systems of sources presented have gaps, limitations, and biases, which are going to be studied in each chapter. The specificities and the methodology used for exploring them are presented at the beginning of every section. In short, the Romanian political police archive is available insofar as the files still exist and were handed to the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive.[22] The Radio Free Europe files hosted at the OSA Archivum

[20] In her book *The Generation of Postmemory*, Marianne Hirsch explains the term "postmemory" saying that "[p]ostmemory describes the relation of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their birth, but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right". See Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, (Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 103. Marianne Hirsch first used the term "postmemory" in an article on Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, in the early 1990s.

[21] Between 2011 and 2014, the author conducted oral history interviews with relatives of the partisans and with some supporters of the Făgăraș Group.

[22] The National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive (CNSAS) is a state agency under parliamentary control, set up in 2000. Its mission is to manage, to work with, and to offer access to the Securitate Archives. The procedure of reaching the files was criticized over the years as heavily bureaucratic by researchers, journalists, and various NGOs. See Lavinia Stan, *Transnațional Justice in Post-Communist Romania: The Politics of Memory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

in Budapest are only a part of the radio's archive; the rest is managed by the Hoover Institution in the US and was not consulted for this study. Finally, the memories presented in this paper are limited to those of the survivors of resistance, and not all the interviews are presented here due to time and space restrictions. Besides the "objective" limitations linked to accessing the sources, there are personal biases to this research, such as the author's personal connection with the subject matter.[23] This is an aspect that brings a new level of subjectivity to the topic, but also a useful insight.

[23] My paternal grandfather Gheorghe Haşu and his brother Andrei Haşu were members of the Făgăraş Group. They were both killed in the 1950s.

CHAPTER ONE
Demonizing Resistance: The Făgăraș Group in the Securitate Files

The first corpus data explored in this paper is the Securitate archive.[24] This section analyzes the archival system created by the communist secret police as an "ethnographic object;" that is," not as a source, but as a site of knowledge production and concept formation, a repository of and generator of social relationship"—as Katherine Verdery asserts, summing up the work of another "ethnographer of the archives," Anne Stoler.[25] The expectation is that an ethnographical approach of the archival unit will offer insight into the Securitate's discourse on the Făgăraș Group. An exploration of this system reveals facts and fictions, gaps, contradictions and mystifications related to the Făgăraș resistance, but it also discloses information about the political police and its practices. The questions to be addressed include: What is the process of creating this archive? Who were the "bandits" and what were their motivations? What is the agency of the files over time?

The Romanian Soviet-style secret police created the first discourse on the Făgăraș resistance by producing political files on the names of people linked to the armed movement. During communism, this discourse was reflected in the Romanian public sphere, in historiographic works, and in propaganda productions.[26] The opening of the Securitate archive in 2000 played a significant role in the construction of a new discourse about anti-

[24] The first and the last section of this chapter were initially written as part of a final paper for the course GENS/HIME 5005 - Historiography: Themes in Its History and Approaches to Its Theory during the fall term 2014. Discussions that I had with two of the instructors, István Rév and Ioana Macrea-Toma, helped me structure my research and define the approach of this archival system.
[25] Katherine Verdery, *Secrets and Truths*, p. 5.
[26] Besides the party-controlled news, there were two propaganda movies inspired by the Făgăraș resistance: *Alarmă în munți [Alert into the Mountains]* produced in 1955 and *Acțiunea Autobuzul [The Action Bus]*, in 1978.

communist armed movements.[27] There is a relationship of dependency between the Securitate discourse and its source: the political files mirror the history of the movement insofar as the history is based on these files. When the information is confronted with other sources, contradictions appear. Critically analyzing the Securitate archive and reading the files beyond their content equates to understanding how the history of the so-called "enemies of the state" was constructed, by whom, with what purpose.

The Securitate used the term "enemy" interchangeably with the term "bandit" in the case of the partisans. Both labels forego evidence, meaning that people could be considered criminals before accusations against them were documented.[28] On the one hand, the suspicion of criminality projected on some persons forced them to go into hiding, even if they did not commit an act of opposition; the fugitives who were hiding were then considered guilty and searched for in order to be arrested.[29] A person's alleged fight against the regime, on the other hand, fuelled political repression. In this cycle, reality and fiction intertwined and influenced each other, mirroring the political apparatus' capacity "to turn the truth into a lie and the lie into a truth," as Maria Los notes.[30] The *lie* was the propaganda and it became the ideological *truth* in which some people believed and others were forced to do so. From this perspective, the Securitate archive is anything but a chronicle of *what* happened. It rather hints to *how* it happened and *why*.

1.1. "Ethnography" of the files: the loquacity of the archive

The Romanian Securitate, as any secret police of a state aiming at total control over its population, can be seen as a form of "secret society," a comparison suggested by Hannah

[27] After the opening of the Securitate archive, the public interest in this theme increased. For historiographical works on the topic of Romanian armed resistance, see Introduction, note 4.
[28] Anne Applebaum states that during communism: "people were arrested not for what they had done, but for who they were." See Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History*, (New York: Doubleday, 2003), p. 45.
[29] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 6, p. 257, 261.
[30] Maria Los, "Lustration and Truth Claims: Unfinished Revolutions in Central Europe," in *Law and Social Inquiry: Journal of the American Bar Association* 20, no. 1 (1995): 117.

Arendt among others.[31] It was a society with an obscure life, even though very present in all aspects of public and private space. The Securitate had its role in consolidating the newly created state structure by detecting and eliminating any form of opposition. In this frame, "the Securitate's fundamental working assumption was that people are not who they seem," notes Katherine Verdery.[32] Accordingly, some "dwellers" of the Securitate archives were in a sense constructed characters; not that they did not exist, but their real biographies melted into the more or less accurate accounts concerning their lives. People were labeled and thrown into a category: "the enemies." Some of them were eventually killed, but all of them were somewhat eliminated from society by being turned into outcasts. The "enemies" were denied the right of *being*. Accordingly, the Securitate had to purge them; it was the case of the partisans, who had to flee their communities once they were labeled as "bandits."

This is not a study about the history of the Securitate, however, some remarks about its activity are necessary in order to contextualize the information in the files.[33] Created in 1948, the Romanian secret police was fighting various categories of "enemies" in the early 1950s. Among other tasks, its mission was to conduct campaigns against the kulaks and to put to silence peasants who were against collectivization.[34] Nevertheless, while fighting the

[31] See Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism,* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979), pp. 435-437, Richard Pipes, *Communism: A History* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2001), Robert Conquest, *Reflections on a Raveged Century*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), Felix Patrikeeff, "Stalinism, Totalitarian Society and the Politics of 'Perfect Control'," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 4, No. 1, (Summer 2003), pp. 4-31.

[32] Katherine Verdery, *Secrets and Thruts*, p. xiv.

[33] For works presenting the history of the Securitate see: Dennis Deletant, *Ceaușescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), Dennis Deletant, *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State, 1948-1965* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2000), Lavinia Stan, "Access to Securitate Files: The Trials and Tribulations of a Romanian Law," *East European Politics and Society* vol. 16, no. 1 (2000), pp. 145-181, Lavinia Stan, "Moral Cleansing Romanian Style," *Problems of Post-Communism* vol. 49, no. 4 (July-August 2002), pp. 52-62, Lavinia Stan "Spies, Files and Lies: Explaining the Failure of Access to Securitate Files," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* vol. 37, no. 3 (2004), pp. 341-359, Marius Oprea (ed.), *Securiștii partidului. Serviciul de cadre al PCR ca poliție politică [The Securitate Officers of the Party. The Officers' Department of the RCP as Political Police]* (București: Polirom, 2002), Stejărel Olaru and Georg Herbstritt, *STASI și Securitatea [STASI and the Securitate]* (București: Humanitas, 2005), Marius Oprea, *Bastionul cruzimii. O istorie a Securității (1948-1964) [The Bastion of Cruelty. A History of the Securitate (1948-1964)]* (București: Polirom, 2008).

[34] For works discussing the process of collectivization in Romania see: Constantin Iordachi, Dorin Dobrincu (eds.)*Transforming Peasants, Property and Power: the Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania, 1949-1962*

"enemies," the repressive apparatus had to recruit and train its staff. Gaps and errors in the files were produced by the Securitate workers while collecting information and conducting investigations. The result of their work—that is, documents, letters, reports, personal files—was part of the internal dialog within the institution and at the same time a source for the external propaganda discourse.

In the early 1950s, the authors of the Securitate files were "uneducated and brutal officers engaged in summary executions, illegal house arrests, imprisonment and deportations," Lavinia Stan points out.[35] She also emphasizes that only two percent of the some 3,500 full-time agents employed by the secret police in 1948 were intellectuals.[36] The inaccuracies of the archives are a result of the Securitate's working practices and they reflect employees' poor education and lack of experience. Errors and misinterpretations can also be linked to the pressure of "solving" as many cases as possible, which sometimes determined officers to report more than they did or they knew. For example, there are many discrepancies beteween what the Securitate reports on some events related to the Făgăraș resistance and what people who participated recall.[37]

In the case of the Făgăraș Mountains, the Securitate created an abundantly inhabited category of "enemies" by producing a large amount of files. The archives do not necessary

(Budapest-New-York: Central European University Press, 2009), Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, *Peasants Under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), Constantin Iordachi and Arnd Bauerkamper (eds.) *The collectivization of agriculture in communist Eastern Europe: comparison and entanglements* (Budapest-New-York: Central European University Press, 2014).

[35] See Lavinia Stan, "Inside the Securitate Archives" (2005), Accesed online: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/inside-the-securitate-archives [May 1, 2015].

[36] Ibid.

[37] A Securitate report from January 1955 details how the authorities shall impose quarantine for alleged typhoid fever in Ludișor, the village where the wife and children of the partisan Gheorghe Hașu lived. It was supposed to be a trap in order to make the man come home and get arrested. Although from the Securitate archive one can imagine that the plan was carried on, neither Gheorghe Hașu's wife nor villagers with whom I discussed remember such an event. See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 770, vol. 36, p. 26. Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu also claims that reports related to the clashes between Securitate troops and the partisans were often twisted in the favour of the Securitate to justify their failure (e.g., more partisans than in reality, less soldiers than were present, bad weather etc). However, it is impossible to check what is accurate in either reports or memoirs. The contradictions only support the idea that sources need to be questioned and confronted with other sources. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV (a collection of Securitate documents annotated by the former partisan).

reveal how many people from the Făgăraș County stood against the regime, but rather how many "enemies" the Securitate labeled. Some of the people who were under surveillance did not do anything against the regime, whereas some of the ones who were active part of the resistance were never hunted down. Even though there were only eleven to thirteen people fighting in the Făgăraș Mountains, the secret police archived over 180 dossiers concerning this "dangerous band."[38] The first 124 of files sum up no less than 50,000 pages.[39] Why this loquacity for such a small group of opponents in a country of 16 million at the time? The excess of files shows the amount of work the Securitate needed to make a case against the partisans and to trace them, but also the paranoiac fear of the regime who invested a lot in annihilating armed resistance. The tens of thousands of files (arranged neither logically nor chronologically) do not focus only on the crimes of the people in the mountains; the accusations had been summarized in some five pages, during the prosecutor's depositions.[40] Neither do they present the biographies of the regime's opponents; some hundred pages would be a most generous space for all partisans and their families. Instead, the personal files mirror the identity of the persons who had been under surveillance: they present the biographies of the "enemies."

In order to make fair use of the files related to the Făgăraș Group, it is necessary to understand the structure of the corpus data to which they belong. Created by the Securitate, the files are still scattered in various Romanian state agencies.[41] Since January 2000, most of them have been declassified and are now hosted and managed by the National Council for the

[38] See Arhiva CNSAS: Dosar Rețea 316608 (3 volumes), Dosar Informativ 770 (124 volumes), Dosar Informativ 149552 (10 volumes), Dosar Informativ 149555 (2 volumes), Dosar Informativ 149558, Dosar Informativ 208772, Dosar Informativ 2087786 (18 volumes), Dosar Penal 16885, Dosar Informativ 690, Dosar Penal 16 (18 volumes), Dosar Informativ 3616. All files were available to researchers in January 2015. However, there might be other (classified or declassified) files on the name of people who supported the resistance or, on the contrary, on the name of those who were informers.
[39] Karl-Heinz Brenndorfer, *Banditi, spioni sau eroi?,* p. 9.
[40] See Arhiva CNSAS, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 10, p. 280-285.
[41] See Lavinia Stan, "Inside the Securitate Archives" (2005), Accesed online: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/inside-the-securitate-archives [Last accessed: May 1, 2015].

Study of the Securitate Archive in Bucharest (CNSAS).[42] While analyzing these dossiers, one must keep in mind that it is impossible to establish how many files have been destroyed—during the Revolution in 1989 and before—and how many are still classified.[43] Moreover, the content of some files seems tainted: for instance, in the trial files of the Făgăraș Group, some pages are missing and there is a blank piece of paper inserted where the original document should have been.[44] No explanation is provided, only the page number of the missing page and its place in the file.

Another fence between the researcher and the files was erected by the institution supposed to offer access to the archive (CNSAS). In order to research a case, one must provide the following information of all the people related to it: name, date and place of birth, and the names of parents. The researcher must also justify the connection of each person to the case.[45] There is no archival catalog to the archive, therefore one must research the topic from other sources beforehand to have an informed guess on what files one could ask for. Sometimes it is almost impossible, however, to obtain all information required *before* reading the files, for the files themselves disclose the data. Given these points, there is a limitation to any research based on Securitate files only, due to the gaps in the files, inconsistencies of documents, and restricted access to the archive.

In the first "personal files" related to the Făgăraș Group produced in 1949-1950, documents were classified as "top secret" even though they contained nothing more than wrong identification dates and misspelled names. In these documents, the partisans were

[42] The procedure of reaching the CNSAS files was criticized over the years as heavily bureaucratic by researchers, journalists, and various NGOs. See Lavinia Stan, *Transnațional Justice*.
[43] Lavinia Stan, "Spies, Files, and Lies: Explaining the Failure of Access to Securitate Files" (2004), Accessed online:
https://www.academia.edu/183566/Spies_Files_and_Lies_Explaining_the_Failure_of_Access_to_Securitate_Files [May 1, 2015].
[44] An example can be found in the CNSAS Archive, Fond Penal no. 16, vol. 2, p. 149.
[45] The electronic form that researchers must fill in order to have acces to the files:
http://www.cnsas.ro/documente/tipuri%20de%20cereri/Completare%20la%20cererea%20de%20acreditare.pdf

already called "bandits," "fascists" and "criminals."[46] There was no evidence or support provided for these accusations; in fact, when the Securitate first condemned the "bandits" in absentia, in 1951, neither the officers who instrumented the case nor the court that sentenced them had accurate information.[47] In 1950, a head of a Securitate regional office wrote a report to his subordinates, asking and warning them at the same time: "We must find what criminal deeds these bandits committed and if they did not do anything, we shall find why."[48] In other words, by assuming that some crimes were already committed by the "bandits," the Securitate *created* their new identity according to the way in which they were expected to act: the partisans must have committed some crime, since they *were* criminals.

The case of the partisan Ion Ilioiu (see Fig. 1) reveals the mechanism of adding details to the biographies of the "enemies." He was a high school student from the town of Făgăraș who fled into the mountains in 1950. In 1954, Ilioiu was wounded and caught during a clash with the Securitate troops in the mountains. A long series of interrogations followed his arrest.[49] However, the goal of the Securitate was not only to find out what kind of a "terrorist" he was, but to add more negative features to his profile. After months of being "processed through specific methods"—as the Securitate used to refer to the beating and torture sessions—Ion Ilioiu ceased to react to any stimuli. The Secret Police did not give up on him, but instead continued to write his "biography." Defying what was obvious, the head of the

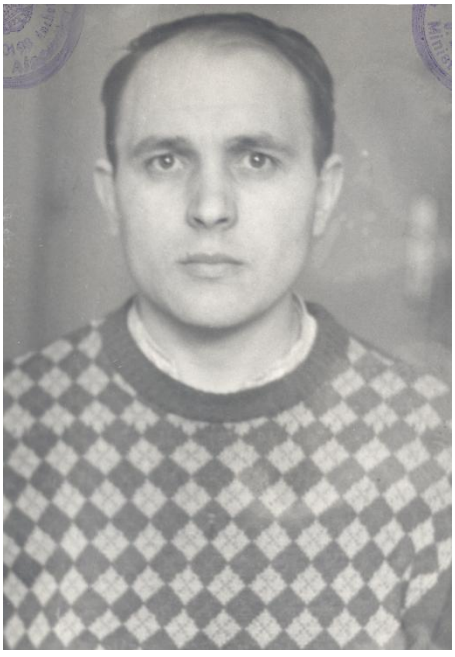


Fig. 1. Ion Ilioiu in arrest (1954). CNSAS Archive

[46] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 1, pp. 400-408.
[47] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, p. 62-63.
[48] See Arhiva CNSAS, Dosar Informativ, 208786, vol. 2, p. 175.
[49] Between August and October 1954, he was interrogated twenty times. One sesion could last up to ten hours. See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, pp. 177-267.

prison where Ilioiu was kept ordered a medical examination to establish what was wrong with the prisoner. The conclusion was that he was suffering from "detention psychosis."[50] The term was not explained, but the induced link between *detention* and *psychosis* probably did not look good in the eyes of the high official who ordered the examination in the first place. Thus, he called other experts for a counter-examination. The second team concluded that Ion Ilioiu was suffering indeed from "detention psychosis," but also that "this mental condition was a late effect of the mystic education that he received, since he was born in a village close to the Sambata Monastery, which is a well-known nest of mysticism."[51]

The condition of Ilioiu was not the issue here, but rather it was the fact that his "official" biography had to be completed with an explanation that would fit his criminal profile. For the communist state apparatus, an "unhealthy origin" had to have a negative consequence. From the Securitate's point of view, the "disease" here was his belief in God. According to his own statements, Ion Ilioiu was indeed a religious man. However, this "truth" was interpreted differently. Whereas in the framework of ideology it was a dangerous attribute, the partisan's wife saw it as a salvation: "he managed to stay sane in horrific conditions due to his strong belief that he was not alone; he spent four years in solitary confinement, but God was his cell mate."[52] Ilioiu himself weighted his deeds from a religious viewpoint (while addressing a Securitate officer): "I might be guilty according to your laws, but I did not do anything wrong in front of God or against my people. I did everything out of love. I wanted everybody to be well, no matter who they were."[53] This case shows how a fact—Ilioiu's belief in God—acquired antagonistic meaning in two systems of interpretations.

The proliferation of documents in the Făgăraș case shows not only the effort of documenting acts of opposition, but also the amount of work the Securitate needed to create

[50] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 10, p. 46.
[51] For the medical reports on Ilioiu's condition, see CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 11, p. 6, 22, 23-29.
[52] Author's interview with Ana Ilioiu, April 2012. All translations from Romanian to English are mine.
[53] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc* (Baia Mare: Editura Marist, 2009), vol. II, p. 80.

profiles that would support the ideological "truth" regarding the "bandits." Secret police officers tried to justify their work and their failure throughout the cases they were investigating. In many cases, the biographies in the files were twisted, not according to what had happened in real life, but to what the annotations of some Securitate officers were saying, suggesting a new path of research. For instance, in August 1989 a Securitate Colonel wrote in red on the margin of a report about Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu: "What about T.O.?"[54]—the acronym for "tehnica operativă" [operative technique] which meant microphones installed in the house of a person under surveillance. The document was only reporting that Ogoranu retired, but the annotation led to a "plan de măsuri" [action plan] with the purpose of installing the T.O. in the house of the pensioner who had already been followed.[55] Nobody dared to reply that it might not be a necessary measure since Ogoranu was a stigmatized old man surrounded by agents who were constantly reporting on his everyday life. Nevertheless, the T.O. order reinforced the label "enemy" from Ogoranu's political profile and kept busy a team of agents who had to complete the operation; other Securitate workers had to listen and transcribe all conversations from that point on.[56]

Ironically enough, the opinions of the subjects of the files cannot be easily found in this archival system. During the interrogations, the "bandits" had to obey an already created identity, so their statements were squeezed through the propaganda framework before entering their own "official" biography. "Enemies" did not have the right to write their own statements, but only to sign the minutes of their interrogations transcribed by some political officers in poor grammar, with misspellings and personal interpretations. In these documents, the partisans appear to be calling themselves "bandits" and refer to the Făgăraș Group as "the terrorist gang." However, the Securitate archive kept the statement of Victor Metea, a member

[54] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 149552, vol. 1, p. 5.
[55] Ibidem, pp. 9-10.
[56] Ibidem, pp. 5-10.

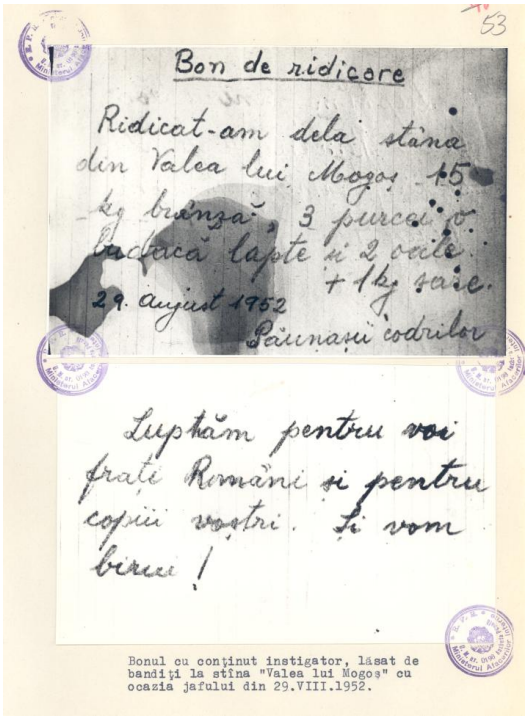
of the Făgăraș resistance, who is reported to have said during the interrogation that: "I have an objection to the minute that I have to sign: instead of using the term 'gang' it is more appropriate to say 'group,' because by 'gang' we understand an association of bandits, robbers, and common law criminals, which we are not."[57] There was no consequence to this remark: the term "gang" continued to be used in Metea's transcribed statements.

Even though difficult to track down in the files of the trial, the voices of the partisans appear in other sections of the Securitate files: for instance, in the notes they left at sheepfolds in the mountains (see Fig. 2 and 3). These handwritten receipts note what food the partisans had taken. Their goal was twofold. On the one hand, they were meant to protect the shepherds; they delivered the papers to the Securitate pretending that had been robbed, although they supported the resistance.[58] On the other hand, the partisans communicated their messages through them, knowing that the shepherds will spread the word.

The "bandits"' opinions are voiced by intermediates such as the undercover informants placed in the cells with them after arrest. The "bandits" confessed their thoughts in front of the "colleagues" with whom they thought they shared a similar fate. The Securitate conducted a parallel interrogation through these agents. Every evening, the "cell mates" were asked to write down the conversations of the day. They reveal partisans' perspectives on their interrogations, for this was the main topic of discussion in the cell.[59] Among other recurrent themes, many of the arrested express the fear that the history of the Făgăraș Group could be distorted through the trial files and the Securitate propaganda.[60] The notes also bring in the

[57] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, p. 328.
[58] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, pp. 381-389, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 7, p. 32, 64, 227, 282, 303.
[59] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, pp. 288-289, 294-298.
[60] Victor Metea's cell mates reports in October 1955: "Victor Metea is angry. He says that the Securitate tries to discredit them [the partisans] in the eyes of the public opinion. He thinks that it might work with people who do not know them. Metea says that there will be books written and they will be portrayed as promiscuous tramps. (...) He claims that thay had a clear goal in their fight and that they were engaged in moral actions." See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, p. 289. An informant who shared the cell with Gheorghe Hașu reported: "He came in rage from the interrogations, saying 'They want to destroy me with their lies. They plan to

informants' profiles and their own interpretations and language.[61] The identity of the partisans and particularly their political affiliations generated radical controversies in the Romanian public sphere and historiographical works; this aspect will be explored in the next section of this chapter.


Bon de ridicare

Ridicat-am dela stâna din Valea lui Mogoș 15 kg brânză, 3 purcei, o ploscă lapte și 2 oale. + 1 kg sare.

29 august 1952

Păunașii codrilor

Luptăm pentru voi frați Români și pentru copiii voștri. Ți vom birui!

Bonul cu conținut instigator, lăsat de banditi la stâna "Valea lui Mogoș" cu ocazia jafului din 29.VIII.1952.

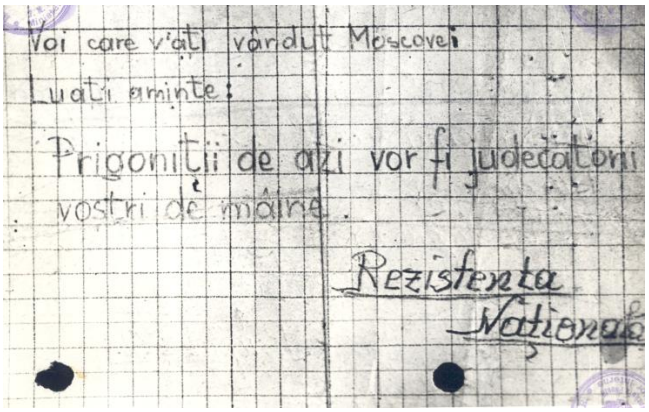
Fig. 2. Note left by the partisans at a sheepfold in the mountains on August 29, 1952.

(CNSAS Archive)

Translation:

"We took from the sheepfold in The Mogos Valley 15 kg cheese, 3 piglets, a pot of milk, and 1 kg of salt.

We fight for you, Romanian brothers, and for your children and we shall overcome!"


Voi care v'ați vândut Moscovei

Luați aminte:

Prigoniții de azi vor fi judecătorii voștri de mâine.

Rezistența Națională

Fig. 3. Note left by the partisans at another sheepfold on June 24, 1953. (CNSAS Archive).

Translation: "You who sold your souls to Moscow, be aware: The persecuted of today shall be the judges of tomorrow. The National Resistance."

show in court that I had beatten my family. (...) I went into the woods knowing that there are real people who know how to fight for the truth.'" See Ibidem, p. 288.

[61] For instance, an undercover prisoner reported that "Harai Pavel is hiding in the cell an *anti-communist prayer book* written in Latin. He says that the only resistance now is through the Church." See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 85, p. 73.

1.2. Who were the "bandits"?

The first official accusation against the members of the Făgăraș Group was that they were Legionaries. Based on the fact that some of them have had indeed ties with the Legionary Movement, the Securitate called all of them fascists.[62] Twenty-five years after the fall of the regime, the political identity of the Făgăraș Group is still the main point of controversy. Primarily based on the Securitate files, some studies produced both before and after 1989 claim that all members of the group were former members of the Legionary Movement.[63] There are also materials presenting a more nuanced picture of the partisans' political identity.[64] According to ideological believes of the interpreters, the Făgăraș movement was either demonized or praised, both before and after the fall of the regime. Balanced or nuanced accounts were almost absent. This section analyzes the political identity and the motivations of the members of the Făgăraș Group. The goal here is not to find the ultimate truth, but to point to the errors and contradictions of various accounts.[65]

Even though some of the Romanian partisans were indeed members or sympathizers of the Cross Brotherhood, the youth organization of the Legionary Movement, Dorin Dobrincu states that "on the whole, the members of the resistance groups and their supporters

[62] For the history of the Legion Archangel Michael and Iron Guard, see Roger Griffin (ed.), *Fascism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 169-170, Constatin Iordachi, *Charisma, politics and violence : the Legion of the "Archangel Michael" in inter-war Romania (*Trondheim: Program on East European Cultures and Societies, 2004), Constantin Iordachi, "Charisma, Religion, Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael", in John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower (eds.), *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2004), pp. 19-53.

[63] See Liviu Pleșa, "Apartenența politică", p. 155; Adrian Brișca and Radu Ciuceanu, *Rezistența Armată,* p. 17, 22; Constatin Vasilescu, *Rezistența Armată*, pp. 53-69.

[64] Dorin Dobincu, "Historicizing a Disputed Theme," p. 328; Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența armată anticomunista" in *Analele Sighet*; Iuliu Crăcană, "Rezistența anticomunistă din munții Făgăraș între anii 1948-1955" in *Mișcarea Armată de Rezistență Anticomunistă din România 1944-1962* (București: Kullusys,2003), pp. 9-44; Dennis Deletant, *Romania sub regimul comunist*, pp. 110-112; Karl-Heinz Brenndorfer, *Banditi, spioni sau eroi?*, pp. 28-50; Traian Golea, *Romania, Beyond the Limits*, pp. 95-99.

[65] In the case of the Făgăraș Group, there were situations in which the same person was first decorated for fighting against fascism, and after some years was condemned for being a fascist. This is the case of Olimpiu Borzea (July 13, 1921-August 11, 2005), one of the main supporters of the Făgăraș Group. Borzea fought in the Second World War and was decorated in 1944 with the medal "Eliberare de sub jugul fascist" [Liberation from the Fascist Yoke]. After some years, he was sentenced to death for being a fascist and for helping a "terrorist band of fascist nature" (that is, the Făgăraș Group). The Securitate confiscated the medal and glued it as "evidence" on a blank page in Borzea's political file. See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, volume 17, p. 294.

were not politically affiliated."[66] Dobrincu supports his argument by citing a Securitate report issued in 1949 which analyzed the political affiliation of more than eight hundred arrested partisans. According to the political police, 56 per cent of them had no political affiliation, 11 per cent were members or sympathizers of the fascist Legionary Movement, while 16 per cent were members of the Communist Party or the mass organizations controlled by the Party (such as the Communist Youth Union and the Ploughmen Front). Based on this, Dobrincu cautions that:

> Methodologically, we could not make an extrapolation on the resistance as a whole, but the number, for a precise interval, is sufficient to make us prudent in the face of mystification, of the interested exaggerations, and the attempts to politically confiscate the resistance.[67]

The same Securitate report is quoted by Dennis Deletant, who highlights that "the partisans were by no means all Legionaries, as we can see from the Securitate statistics."[68] Liviu Pleșa scrutinized the political affiliation of the armed anti-communist groups in Transylvania—where the Făgăraș County is located—and came to the conclusion that the majority of partisans in this region were either from the National Peasant Party (PNȚ) or Legionaries.[69] The author adds that in the case of the supporters "we cannot talk about prevalent political affiliation because all political parties were represented."[70] Supporting the idea that there is no massive mutation of Legionaries in the anti-communist movement, Nicoleta Spiridon points to a statement of Cornel Drăgoi, one of the supporters of the group on the southern slope of Făgăraș Mountains, who stated that:

> Even if some of the partisans had been in the past members of former political parties or of the Legionary Movement (...), the partisan groups did not have a fascist character (...). Their fight was not of

[66] Dorin Dorbincu, "Historicizing a Disputed Theme," p. 331.
[67] Ibidem, p. 332.
[68] Dennis Deletant, *Romania sub regimul comunist*, pp. 78-79.
[69] Liviu Pleșa, "Apartenența politică" pp. 141-181.
[70] Ibidem, p. 155.

legionary, Liberal, or National Peasant Party origin, but anti-communist and anti-Russian.[71]

In the Făgăraș Group, four partisans were active in the Legionary Movement. Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, Andrei Hașu, Ioan Chiujdea, and Laurean Hașu were sentenced to prison after the Legionary Rebelion in January 1941, which marked the end of the short-lived National Legionary State government. They were released from prison during a general amnesty in 1944 and sent to the so-called "disciplinary battalions" as a measure of rehabilitation.[72] After the war, all four were accepted to Cluj University, in different departments. The former Legionaries went into hiding in May 1948, in the context of a wave of arrests within Romanian high schools and universities.[73] Fearing that they would be again sent to prison, the four men returned to their parents in the Făgăraș region and avoided public spaces. Shortly after, they joined the resistance.

Fig. 4. Ion GavrilăOgoranu (student). Not dated. CNSAS Archive

Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu (January 1, 1923- May 1, 2006) was the best known leader of the Făgăraș Group and the only partisan who escaped arrest (See Fig. 4). In 1947, he became the coordinator of the Brotherhood of the Cross organizations in Transylvania.[74] After 1955/56 when the group in the mountains was annihilated, he hid alone for 21 years. Sentenced to death twice (in absentia), he was only arrested only in 1976, but was released after six months of

[71] Raluca Nicoleta Spiridon, "Legenda Mișcării Naționale de Rezistență" in *Mișcarea Armată de Rezistență Anticomunistă din România 1944-1962*, p. 355.
[72] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *La pas prin Frățiile de Cruce, [Walking Through the Brotherhood of the Cross], (București: Editura Mișcării Legionare, 2006),* pp. 152-157.
[73] In the night of May 14/15, 1948 some thousands students were arrested across the country for being members or sympatizers of the Legionary organization The Brotherhood of the Cross. See Romulus Rusan, *Cronologia și geografia represiunii comuniste în Romania. Recensământul populației concentraționare (1945-1989)* [The Chronology and Geography of the Communist Repression in Romania. Camp Population Census], (București: Fundația Academia Civică, 2007), p. 21.
[74] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc*, (Timișoara: Marineasa, 1995), vol I, pp. 51-56.

interrogation. He was followed by the Securitate until 1989.[75] Ogoranu was the only member of the Făgăraș Group who published his memoirs after 1995.[76] He dedicated a volume to his legionary past, stressing that his political opinions had nothing to do with racism and anti-Semitism.[77] In his volumes and in various public interviews he stated that the common goal of the armed resistance was the fight against communism and that partisans were not representing the Legionary Movement.[78] While admitting his activity as a Legionary, he emphasised his religious, moral, and nationalist convictions.[79] However, these statements do not prove that the Legionaries of the Făgăraș Group did not share the Legion's anti-Semitic creed. Even though Ogoranu's statement could be interpreted as a belate defense, sources on the topic suggest that such convictions did not play a role in forming the resistance.

The Securitate did not document during the two trials against the partisans—in 1951 and 1957—any acts of anti-Semitism committed by the "band." Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu stated in his memoires that among those who helped the partisans on different occasions were Jewish doctors: Dr. Anore Schull, who was in contact with Gelu Novac's father and provided the group with medicines, Dr. Iosif Ziegler, who was in contact with another close supporter of the partisans, dr. Nicolae Burlacu, and Dr. Andrei Neuman, the leader of the Jewish Community in Făgăraș who was also in contact with Dr. Burlacu.[80] According to the Securitate files, when interrogated about Dr. Burlacu, Dr. Ziegler provided a "good caracterization," even though it is fair to assume that he knew that the former was a

[75] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 149552, vol 1, pp. 9-10.
[76] After the fall of the regime, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu became a prolific writer. Between 1995 and 2006, he published 10 books. The first four of them—*Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc [Pine Trees Break, but They Do Not Bend]*—are dedicated to the history and the memory of the Făgăraș Group. Ogoranu's memoirs will be discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, which analyzes the construction of the memory of the Făgăraș Group.
[77] On the same topic, Ogoranu added that "back then, nobody would ask you if you were member of a certain political party, but only if you were ready to fight and to die for this country." See Liviu Pleșa, "Aparenența politică," p. 181.
[78] Similar opinions were worded by other participants in the Făgăraș resistance. See Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența armată anticomunistă din Muntii Făgăraș-versantul nordic," pp. 441-444.
[79] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *La pas prin Frățiile de Cruce*.
[80] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki-Nicoara, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. III (Timisoara: Marineasa, 1999), p. 187-188.

Legionary. Ogoranu and other supporters of resistance interviewed by a journalist who co-authored the volume, all Jews mentioned were part of a group of intellectuals who supported the resistance. The network had been set by Prof. Mihai Novac, the father of the partisans Gelu Novac. The Securitate inquiry also mentions that the partisans tried to get in contact with different diplomatic missions, including the Israeli Legation in Bucharest.[81] To my knowledge, there was no public confirmation or denial of these statements from the part of the Jewish community in Făgăraș.

Fig. 5. From left to right: Andrei Hașu, student (courtesy of the Hașu family), Laurean Hașu and Ioan Chiujdea in arrest, 1955 (CNSAS Archive).

Andrei Hașu (June 15, 1917-February 23, 1952) was the first leader of the Făgăraș Group, between May 1950 and February 1952, when he was killed by soldiers who surrounded the place where he was hiding (See Fig 5). His dead body was displayed at the entrance of the House of Culture [Căminul Cultural] in his home village. Adults and school children were sent to see him and to learn what happens to the bandits and to those who help them.[82] Between 1944 and 1948, Andrei Hașu lived in Arad city; he returned to Făgăraș in

[81] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 38, p. 145. See also Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența armată anticomunista," p. 482.
[82] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, p. 89. The information was confirmed during oral history interviews with people from the village who witnessed the event.

1948, fearing arrest. His father was already on the Securitate black list for being both a *chiabur* (i.e., a wealthy peasant or kulak) and a former member of the National Peasants' Party.[83] Laurean Hașu (Octomber 22, 1921-November 20, 1957) and Ioan Chiujdea (March 14, 1921-November 20, 1957) had similar fates: former Legionaries and students at the emerge of the communist regime, they entered a clandestine life when the arrests of 1948 started (See Fig. 5). They were sent to trial together with four other members of the group in 1955-1957 and executed in 1957.

All four members of the group who had ties with the Legionary Movement were sentenced to death in absentia in July 1951, one year after the Făgăraș Group was formed. The accusations against them were poorly formulated and documented. Besides being "bandits," they were condemned for having "hostile feelings against the democratic regime."[84] However, their main crime was their political affiliation, for which they had already been convicted in the early 1940s. The deposition of the military prosecutor who pleaded against them pointed to the alleged intentions of the "bandits," not to real criminal acts:

> These enemies of people went into the mountains with the intention of overthrowing the order and the security of the state. (...) The fugitive bandits were in contact with various dubious and reactionary elements that were hostile to our democratic regime and with whom they shared same feelings and hatred against the working class.[85]

. Regarding the rest of the partisans—besides the four former members of the Legionary Movement mentioned above—half of them were not politically affiliated, and the other half became members of the Brotherhood of the Cross in 1947-1948, right before the resistance began. During the Legionary events in 1940s, some of them were around ten years old. According to their own statements and to the Securitate files, the politically unaffiliated were: Gheorghe Hașu, Ioan Pop, Victor Metea and Toma Pirău.

[83] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 5, p. 437.
[84] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 1, p. 400.
[85] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 1, pp. 400-401.

Fig. 6. From left to right: Gheorghe Hașu, Ioan Pop, Victor Metea in arrest (1955). CNSAS Archive.

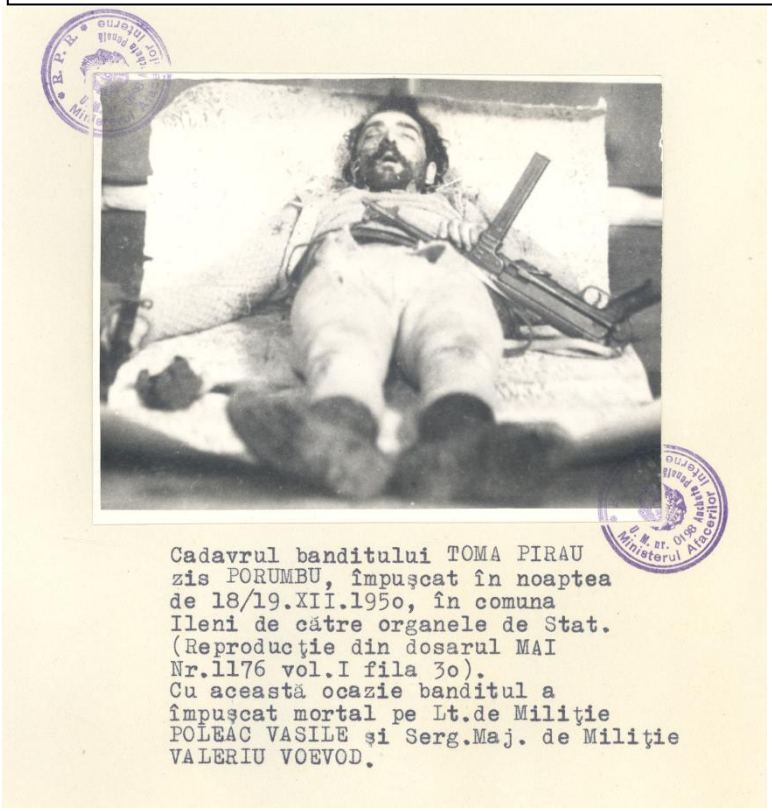


Fig. 7. The body of Toma Pirău, photographed by the Securitate after he was killed, according to the text under the photographed (or after he committed suicide, according to witnesses). The text notes the date of death, 18/19 December 1950, and the casualties.
According to his political file, Pirău was hiding in the attic of his uncle's residence in Ileni village, when the house was surrounded by night. The partisan refused to surrender, hence both sides opened fire. After some hours, the Securitate brought in Pirău's mother. An officer tried to approach the partisan, using her as living shield while going up to the attic. Witnesses claim that he killed himself when facing this situation. (CNSAS Archive)

Gheorghe Hașu (April 29, 1921 - November 20, 1957) was a carpenter and roofer from a wealthy peasant family; after he was arrested in 1955 he declared that he was a sympathizer and supporter of the National Peasants' Party, since his father was a member of this party (see Fig. 6). During interrogations, he stated that he did not leave home for political reasons, but because of social injustice and terror.[86] Ioan Pop (January 21, 1908 - November 20, 1957) had both Romanian and American citizenship (see Fig. 6). He was born in the US to a Romanian immigrant family. Pop worked as a public servant at the Ministry for Economy and after getting married he returned to his home village, where he became a forester. According to his declaration , he was a voter and sympathizer of the Peasants' Party. In his personal file the Securitate noted: "No political activity. Member of the Ploughmen Front."[87] Victor Metea (March 21, 1929 - April 23, 1958) was a student who joined the Făgăraș Group during a summer vacation (see Fig. 6). He declared that he had no political affiliation and that during high school he refused to join the Brotherhood of the Cross:

> I knew what had happened in the USSR with the Church, the family, and the private property and I was worried. My hatred towards the regime increased as I saw the burden and persecution of my father, who was considered a *chiabur* [kulak]. I was deprived of many rights myself, so I naturally befriended those who were persecuted. Members of my family had already been arrested for no reason. I made no politics of any kind; I was against the system and the new social organization.[88]

The fourth non-politically active partisan was Toma Pirău (November 11, 1927 - December 19, 1950). He was a poor peasant who decided to join the group in the mountains while on leave from mandatory military service. Seeing the effects of brutal communization in his home village, he went into hiding following the example of a close childhood friend

[86] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, p. 336.
[87] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, p. 433. The Ploughmen Front was a left-wing agrarian political organization, founded in 1933 by Petru Groza, who later served as prime-minister under the communist regime.
[88] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol 2, p. 108, 114.

who was already a partisan, Victor Metea. Although he had no land, he spoke against collectivization during a public meeting and then joined the group. Hașu and Pop were executed in November 1957, after being sentenced to death. Pirău died in unclear circumstances in 1951, when asked to surrender by the Securitate forces who discovered the house in which he was hiding (see Fig. 7). Some Securitate reports state that he was killed, whereas witnesses who were interrogated by the political police mention suicide. The other three partisans—Gheorghe Hașu, Victor Metea, and Ioan Pop—were executed in November 1957, after being arrested, sent to trial, and sentenced to death.

Five other young men joined the Brotherhood of the Cross right before the resistance started: Ion Ilioiu (November 24, 1921-Octomber 31, 2012), Gelu Novac (January 15, 1931-August 6, 1954), Gheorghe Șovăială(May 5, 1925-August 6, 1954), Ioan Novac (February 23, 1939-November 20, 1957), and Remus Sofonea (February 8, 1929-June 1955). Gheorghe Șovăialăand Gelu Novac were shot dead by Securitate officers during a clash, after the two of them went away from the Făgăraș County, probably planning to cross the border to Yugoslavia (See Fig. 8).

Fig. 8. The bodies of Gheorghe Sofonea and Gelu Novac, photographed by the Securitate (1954). They were killed during an open fire with Securitate troops, on a field near Alba, 200 km away from their home town. According to other partisans, they were probably planning to break the border to Yugoslavia. (CNSAS Archive).

In 1955, Sofonea was shot by accident by one of his fellow partisans and died.[89] The other two, Ilioiu and Novac I., were arrested in 1954-1955 and interrogated. All interrogations begin with a standard question: "What was your political activity before and after August 23, 1944?" According to the transcripts, the Legionaries fled home trying to avoid arrest. They knew about other anti-communist groups in the country and tried to get in contact with them – the reports claim.[90] The men with no political affiliation entered the Securitate black lists for various reasons, in a context in which dropping a word of reproach against the regime, listening to an "imperialist" radio program, being a "kulak," having an "unhealthy" origin or knowing someone wanted by the Secret Police was enough to make anybody a subject of surveillance.[91]

The "bandits," therefore, did not form a monolithic group: they had different political affiliations and social positions and came from various backgrounds. Most of them indeed had ties with the Legionary Movement, something they never denied; others had never been politically active before. The supporting network of the partisans is even less homogeneous: among the people who actively helped them were Romanians, Jews, Roma people, Saxons, men, women, children, intellectuals, peasants, and members of various political parties, including communists.[92]

[89] See Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența armată anticomunistă," pp. 482-483.
[90] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, p. 247. The information is confirmed by the partisans themselves. They tried to get in contact with the Arnăuțoiu Group, active on the southern slope of the Făgăraș Mountains, but they did not succed. Other contacts were made with an organization of students in Cluj-Napoca city who were preparing to join the partisans in the Făgăraș Mountains. However, they were arrested before putting the plan in practice.
[91] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 37, p. 91.
[92] In one of his books, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu provides a list of over 800 names and identity details of people who supported the armed anti-communist resistance in the Făgăraș Mountains. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, pp. 171-225. Statements of tourists of various social, political, and ethnical background who met the partisans in the mountains can be found in the archive. See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 1, pp. 348-352; vol 2, pp. 61-64, vol. 3., p. 313.

1.3. Five years in the Mountains: facts, fictions, and controversies

As discussed in the section above, the opinions of the partisans are not easy to find in the Securitate archive. Consequently, their version about the history of Făgăraș Group is difficult to trace through the files. There is a preset pattern to the interrogations: the same questions for everybody, all answers reformulated by the Securitate officer who transcribed the dialogues. This section deals with the controversies of the files and the mystifications based on them. What is behind the practices of the Securitate when constructing a case? How can one distinguish facts from fiction based on reports full of inaccuracies? How did the legends related to the Făgăraș Group came into being?

Between 1950, when the group in the Făgăraș Mountains became active, and 1955/1956, when it was annihilated, the Securitate produced two sets of files meant to disclose the activity of the "bandits." Each of them was related to a trial. The first trial of the partisans took place in 1951, one year after the "bandits" had fled into the mountains. The Securitate had little information about the resistance and the case was investigated based mostly on rumors and guesses. The files mirror not so much the activity of the partisans, but rather the chaotic organization of the secret police. As Lavinia Stan points out, "[o]ver the years, the Securitate's methods, goals and personnel changed."[93] From its set-up in 1948 until 1964, before Nicolae Ceaușescu became the head of state, the activity of the political police was marked by violence and open abuses; these practices are reflected in the Securitate archive.[94]

Various branches of the Securitate and Militia investigated the Făgăraș case, opened in in November 15/16, 1950 when the Securitate arrested five supporters of the partisans (a sixth

[93] Lavinia Stan "Insisde the Securitate Archives" (2005), Accesed online: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/inside-the-securitate-archives [Last accessed: May 3, 2015].
[94] Idem.

one was killed during the "operation").[95] After this capture, the political police arrested and interrogated 50 more people. The purpose was to find out who were the partisans, since the authorities had vague information about them. Based on the testimonies of the arrested—none of whom had been in the mountains and most of whom did not meet the partisans—the Securitate built a case against the "bandits."

A 1950 Securitate report summarizes well the activity of the officers who gathered the "evidence" for the trial against the partisans: "[f]rom the activities related to this case, the investigator does not understand anything."[96] Same document reproaches that:

> We asked four copies of each document for four offices and instead of that, the original documents were split in four directions. Some investigators let the bandits write whatever they wanted to write and to use expressions that are not in line with our indications. The investigation is carried on by chance and not by plan.[97]

Peasants, workers, pensioners, teenagers, and former soldiers who had never been in the mountains became, nonetheless, the primary source of information for the confused investigators.[98] The arrested were forced to describe in detail how the partisans were living, where they were hiding food and weapons, and what the agenda of the "conspirational meetings" in the mountains were.[99] In order to get them to tell the "truth" (that is, to confess what they did not know), they were "processed thoroughly"—as the heads of the Securitate ordered.[100] High officials of the Securitate in Făgăraș and Brasov refer quite often to this so-called "processing" during the interrogations. Some survivors explained that it was synonymous with torture. Virgil Radeș, who was arrested in November 1950 and spent fourteen years in prison (until the general amnesty of 1964), recalled after the fall of the

[95] For the supporting network of the partisans, see Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența armată anticomunistă," in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie*, pp. 448-450.
[96] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 1, p. 415.
[97] See CNAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 3, p. 62-63.
[98] The minutes of some reports are almost illegible. High-rank Securitate officers note on the margins of some documents: "this cannot be read" or "I need a summary of this" or "type it!". See CNSAS Archive Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 3, p. 185, 186, 197.
[99] The files of the trial in 1951 are Dosar Penal 1210 volumes 1 to 6 and Dosar Penal 13618, vol. 1 to 3.
[100] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 6, p. 319.

regime: "they would connect me to electric power until I fell down. It felt like my brain was dragged out of my head. It was an unimaginable agony that cannot be put into words."[101] A seventeen year old student had the same experience at the Securitate in Făgăraș where he was "processed" by Colonel Iosif Kalousek.[102] Other methods used during the interrogations included beating the soles until one loses conscious, breaking internal organs through sledgehammer blows on a wood batten put on the prisoner, and pulling out teeth and/or nails.[103] Women suspected of having a link with resistance did not receive a different treatment. In 1951, a Securitate staff member set fire to the lower part of the body of a teenage girl who refused to speak during interrogation.[104] In short, the "methods" were up to the imagination of the officers who conducted the interrogations. There were no guidelines, but also no repercussions for abuses.

The testimonies gathered through these methods were used as evidence against the partisans. In July 16, 1951 the Military Court in Stalin town (formerly Brasov) deliberated in unanimity that all members of the Făgăraș Group were guilty of "forming a terrorist band of fascist character."[105] The four of the partisans who were former Legionaries—Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, Ioan Chiujdea, Andrei Hașu, and Laurean Hașu—were sentenced to death in absentia and the other six—Gheorghe Hașu, Gheorghe Șovăială, Victor Metea, Remus Sofonea, Ioan Novac, Gelu Novac, and Ion Ilioiu—were sentenced to 25 years of hard labor and 10 years of civic degradation.[106] Some names and identification dates were wrong (for instance, Gelu Novac is called Gheorghe Novac and Gheorghe Hașu's date of birth is wrong). Toma Pirău had died and Ioan Pop joined the group after this trial. Four other supporters of

[101] "Marturia lui Virgil Radeș" ["The testimony of Virgil Radeș"] in Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki, *Brazii se frâng*, vol III, p. 86.
[102] See Victor Ioan Pică, *Libertatea*, pp. 161-162.
[103] See Victor Ioan Pica, *Libertatea*, p. 166, 168, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki, *Brazii se frâng,* vol. III, pp. 66-67, 113, 137, 163, 169.
[104] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol III, p. 294.
[105] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 1, pp. 400-401.
[106] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 1., pp. 400-415, 472-437, 486-497.

resistance were sentenced to death in 1951 and were executed shortly after. Over 50 other persons were sentenced to prison.

Facts and fictions intertwine in these files. Arrested suspects gave the Securitate false information based on which the officers came to false conclusions; the exact reason behind these misinterpretations is impossible to find.[107] On the whole, the trial in 1951 created the image of the Făgăraș resistance and demonized the partisans. Popularizing the sentences, the state apparatus made sure that people in the Făgăraș County knew the risk of getting in contact with a "bandit."

The second trial of the partisans took place in 1957, after the last six had been arrested: Victor Metea, Ioan Novac, Gheorghe Hașu, Ioan Pop, Ioan Ilioiu, and Laurean Hașu. The others were already dead, with one exception: Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu. The interrogations lasted for over two years—between August 1955 and July 1957—and the trial took place in August 1957. The 18 files of the trial count more than 6000 files.[108] Between their covers, the Securitate archived the minutes of all interrogations of the partisans and supporters who were arrested, the official documents related to the trial, the correspondence between various state institutions between 1955 and 1957, notes from informants, the personal files of all who were interrogated related to this case, family photographs confiscated, "intercepted" letters that never reached their destination, reports, orders, and action plans. In one of the files, one can find even a pressed edelweiss, the kind that grows on the top of the Făgăraș Mountains. No information in the dossier makes reference to the flower.[109]

[107] Some of the people interrogated talk about 100 partisans in the Făgăraș Mountains (there were ten of them at that point) and about 12.000 fighters in the Apuseni Mountains. Others claim that they received flyers stating that 80% of the peasants are ready to organize and fight against the regime. None of this information was true. On the other hand, the Securitate made connections that seem to have never existed between the partisans in the Făgăraș Mountains and other anti-communist groups in Romania. See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 13618, vol. 1, p. 43, 58-61, 84.

[108] CNSAS Archive, Dosar penal 16, volumes 1 to 18.

[109] The flower can be linked to a house searching at the residence of Eugenia Hașu, the wife of the partisan Gheorghe Hașu. According to her testimonies, her husband brought hen an edelweiss in 1950, when he came home to see his new born son. The flower was found by the Securitate officers and was considered "evidence"

Each of the six partisans was interrogated at least twenty times. At the beginning of each session, the person who transcribed everything noted the time when the meeting started and when it ended, and also the names of the investigator. Many meetings took place during night and some lasted ten to fourteen hours.[110] In other cases, a meeting that lasted over six hours is transcribed in five pages with no explanation of what happened when nobody was talking.[111] Many officers noted the time when the dialog started, but they omitted to note when it ended.[112] Instead of questions, the investigator said only, "continue further!" [continuă mai departe] or "present the activities of the band" [prezintă activitățile bandei].[113] At the trial in 1957 all partisans were found guilty of the "crime of conspiracy against the internal and external security of the state" and were condemned to death. Gheorghe Hașu, Victor Metea, Ioan Pop, Ioan Novac, Laurean Hașu, and Ioan Chiujdea were executed on November 20, 1957 at the Jilava prison near Bucharest.[114]

The Securitate produced several "legends" related to the Făgăraș Group. The term was used by the secret police when a fictional story was spread in the public sphere as part of an "action plan" [plan de acțiune]. The "legend" that could have twisted the history of the Făgăraș Group says that Ion GavrilăOgoranu betrayed his comRadeș in the mountains. He allegedly did it in order to save his life. The idea is based on the assumption (in fact, another "legend") that if one had helped the Securitate, one would have been protected. Col. Gheorghe Craciun, the head of the regional Securitate in 1955, was the one who had the idea and he

that the "bandit" visited her. The women, her teenage brother and her parents were arrested and brutally investigated several days and nights. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki, "The Testimonies of Eugenia Hașu, the wife of the anti-communist fighter Gheorghe Hașu," in *Brazii se frâng*, vol.III, pp. 36-38. See also Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. I, pp. 117-118.

[110] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol 3, p. 1.

[111] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 1, pp. 324-329.

[112] Ibid, p. 104, 107, 109.

[113] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, p. 20, 128 and Dosar Penal 16, vol. 12, pp. 7-12.

[114] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, p. 331, 351, 352. See also Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența armată anticomunista din Muntii Făgăraș," p. 487.

refers to it in various internal documents.[115] The goal was to discredit the resistance, but also to make sure that people from the Făgăraș County would not help Ogoranu when he would show up in the region. Many people in the Făgăraș County, even members of the family of the partisans, believe this legend or see it as a possibility.[116] They cannot point to the moment when they learned that Ogoranu betrayed his friends or to any evidence supporting this story. However, they seem to think that this would explain why he was not arrested until 1976. There is no evidence of an alleged colaboration of Ogoranu with the secret police in the archive. Securitate officers compliled some 120 files while searching the country for Ogoranu, between 1955 and 1976. The files mirror also the period between 1976 and 1989, when he was followed round the clock.

The political files of people involved in the Făgăraș resistance show how the Securitate constructed a case against its "enemies." Based on the archive and though it, the communist propaganda, created the image of the "bandits." On the one hand, the reports point also to the internal organization of the Securitate and to the way it operated. On the other hand, the archive offers a glimpse into the Romania's communist justice system during the 1950s. After the fall of communism, the Securitate files became the link that survivors needed in order to make sense of their own experiences; the next section explores the effect of the archive on the real lives of their subjects.

1.4. Securitate files and their "time bomb" agency

Seen as a site of knowledge, the Securitate archives can be mistakenly taken as relics of a dead *secret society* that once existed. If this were true, it would mean that they have no

[115] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 691474, vol. 1, p. 6.
[116] The topic was brought up be supporters of the resistance and family members of the partisans during oral history interviews conducted by the author of this paper. Some of them still wonder if Ogoranu betrayed the group. Others strongly believe that this is true.

active role in the present, not more than the effect of an archeological site of a past locality. If one visits the ruins of an ancient city, one learns about the way in which life was organized, one can explore dimensions of living spaces and households, traces of building materials, patterns of city landscape and so on, but the ruins of the past do not interfere with one's life, they do not *act*. However, this is not the case for the Securitate files. There are two aspects to be discussed here: the agency of the files during communism and their late effect in post-1989 society.

Katherine Verdery explores the idea that the political police files are "social agents." Citing the work of Matthew Hull, Katherine Verdery points to a Pakistani bureaucrat who stated that "files are time bombs."[117] The "time bomb" agency of the archives is then described, noting, among other things, that the files "have wrecked lives, destroyed family relationships and friendships, made and broke careers in politics and other domains, sought and failed to achieve 'transitional justice' and 'democratization.'"[118]

During their compilation the files of the Securitate covered in most cases a very long period of time in the lives of their subjects. Cristina Vatulescu argues that "while a typical police file is usually limited to recording one crime, the Soviet-style personal file is defined by its attempt to cover the extensive biography of the suspect."[119] These new biographies created through the files clashed over time with the real lives of the persons under surveillance. I do not point here to the practices of the Securitate, which indeed affected the lives of the people, but to the way in which the identity created by the Securitate impacted the "owner" of the files, in other words to the agency of the files. For instance, the children of the partisans and those of people who supported the group could not live as ordinary children, for they were *made* "children of the bandit." Even though they were too young to have a personal

[117] Katherine Verdery, *Secrets and Truths,* p. 72.
[118] Ibidem.
[119] Cristina Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 13.

file and a biography, their real identity was later drawn in the light of the political activity of their parents that followed them like a shadow throughout their lives. Ten or fifteen years after the resistance was annihilated, the children of the bandits became adults and faced the stigma: they were rejected from college and could not find jobs in a time when a "healthy origin was a requirement."[120]

Another example is the case of Elena Șofariu, a former school colleague of Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu. Even though she had no link whatsoever to any of the partisans or their families, she was *made* a "close supporter" of the group. At the beginning, she was *made* "a friend" of Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, but as years went by, she "became" his mistress. The Securitate used undercover agents who pretended to be her friends, colleagues, and acquaintances, trying to reach Ogoranu through her. Various Securitate officers tried to seduce her just to find more information that she was believed to have (after promising to marry her, fake *fiancés* dumped her). She never got married and she died without knowing that she had actually lived the life of a character invented by the Securitate. Her story is revealed by Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, who found her file and published her story, asking her to forgive him for ruining her life without intending to and without even knowing her. Everything started because she had been seen once in a group where Ogoranu was also present.[121]

After 1989, the files were first seen as sources of truth by many people, including the only partisan who escaped the Securitate. He published a volume of excerpts from the Securitate's thick dossiers and summed up his findings:

> Regarding the truth and the lies in the files: some of the reports are true, presented as they have happened; others were embellished to make them [the Securitate] look good, making up facts or excuses;

[120] The information in this paraghraph refferes to the chidren of Gheorghe Hașu and Ioan Pop, the two partisans who were married, and was obtained during interviews that I had with them between 2011 and 2014.
[121] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, p. 15.

> there are also reports totally made up insofar as everything is presented in a way to make us guilty.[122]

According to Ogoranu, these files prove that there was resistance against communism and that the fight between the Securitate and its opponents produced severe changes in the life of the communities in the Făgăraș County. However, Ogoranu insists that it is dangerous to read the files looking for "historical truth." He argues that even behind the facts proven to be true, there might be pitfalls. Ogoranu gives the example of the haunted "informants," saying that it would be a great mistake to make all names public: "At least in our case, the fact that one signed an *angajament* [commitment] does not make one guilty (...). Some of them had at the same time a commitment to us and they never broke it"[123]

Conclusion

The Securitate archive mirrors the first image of the Făgăraș Group and reveals the features of a "terrorist band" during the first years of communism in Romania. The inaccuracies of the files point to the gaps and fictions of the propaganda discourse. Controversies linked to the identity of the partisans can be understood by looking at every particular case, by questioning each report. The archival system may not clarify who *really* were the opponents of the regime in the Făgăraș County and what *exactly* happened, but provides valuable information on how the resistance emerged and why, what was the reaction of the regime to it, and how the phenomenon was annihilated. It also offers an insight into the Securitate working practices in its fight against the "state enemies." At the same time, the files disclose what the political police understood by *evidence* and *investigation*, and what *trial* and *justice* meant during communism.

[122] Ibid.
[123] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, p. 13.

When only comparing the account of the Securitate on a particular issue with other historical sources, the reader of the Securitate archive stands on the Securitate's side, who claimed to produce a site of *truth* about a historical event. In this, the site is brought back to life with its original function, even if used in a different way: not to prove that the identities (or faults) of the characters in the files were true, but to claim they were false. The agency of the archive is defused when the files are explored beyond their content, as artifacts of the archival system which produced them. However, the propaganda discourse of the Securitate clashed over time and intertwine with other discourses on the Făgăraș Group. The first reaction was the Western counter-propaganda discourse of the 1950s, which will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO
Praising Resistance: The Western Propaganda in the Radio Free Europe Archives

After analyzing how the history of the Făgăraș Group is reflected in the Securitate files, this chapter explores the construction of the Radio Free Europe discourse with respect to the Romanian armed resistance.[124] The primary source of this section is another archival system, namely the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Research Institute Archive, managed by the OSA Archivum in Budapest.[125] The purpose is to look at how the Romanian resistance was perceived and presented on the other side of the Iron Curtain. How was the discourse of RFE/RL constructed and with what purpose? What were the sources behind the files produced by the American-financed Research Institute? How did this discourse intertwine with the communist propaganda discourse and what was the role of this cross-border dialogue in shaping the history of the Romanian armed anti-communist movement? The first two sections explore the newsletters published by the RFE/RL Institute and the information gathered from Romanian refugees. The last part is dedicated to a group of Romanian fugitives recruited by the American forces and parachuted back to Romania. They were meant to become a link between the Făgăraș Group and the American representatives who sent them.

Before analyzing the file, one must understand their background. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute's archive is a record of the Cold War. The two radio stations were considered "the most influential politically oriented international radio stations

[124] I studied the RFE/RL archive as part of my research for the course LEGS 5820 - Archives, Evidence and Human Rights. I am indebted to my supervisors, András Mink and Csaba Szilágyi, who helped me find my way through the OSA archive. The first two sections of this chapter were initially drafted as a final paper for this class.

[125] The Open Society Archives (OSA) at Central European University is an archival institution opened in 1996. According to the OSA web page, OSA is "one of the world's largest repositories of Cold War, Radio Free Europe and samizdat holdings." See: http://www.osaarchivum.org/about-us. [Last accessed February 28, 2015].

in history"—as Arch Puddington, the deputy director of the radios' New York bureau, points out.[126] The purpose of RFE and RL was not simply to inform, argues the author, but to fight the communist propaganda discourse poured into the households of Eastern European citizens by the national party-controlled radios.[127] In contact with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who financed the radios, RFE and RL produced a vast amount of materials that was not broadcast, but was used for internal purposes (such as background documentation or reports for the US institutions).[128] From the U.S. point of view, RFE and RL were "an instrument of American foreign policy";[129] listeners, however, saw the broadcasters as members of the resistance.

The focus of this chapter is the Romanian Unit, as part of the News and Information Department of Radio Free Europe, and its records.[130] Within these documents, I looked for accounts related to the Romanian armed resistance, with a specific focus on the group who fought on the northern slope of the Făgăraș Mountains. During my research at the OSA Archive, I studied three main fonds within the Archival Catalog and the Digitaly Repository. Firstly, I looked at the *Communism, Cold War and their Afterlife* unit, which holds documents related to "RFE/RL's extensive monitoring, research and analysis activities from the early 1950s to the regime changes and beyond, until the mid-1990s."[131] Secondly, the *Background Reports* unit offers valuable information on political issues within the monitored Romania.

[126] Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), Preface, p. ix.
[127] The goals and develpments of RFE and RL in the early 1950s are explored in various works. See, for instance, Paul B. Henze, "RFE's Early Years: Evolution of Broadcast Policy and Evidence of Broadcast Impact" in A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta (eds.) *Cold War Broadcasting. Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Budapest-New-York: Central European University Press, 2010), pp. 3-16 and Gene Sosin, "Goals of Radio Liberty," *Cold War Broadcasting*, pp. 17-24.
[128] Founded in 1949 as an anti-communist news sources by the National Committee for a Free Europe, RFE/RL were financed mainly by the CIA, even though it was officially claimed that a public fund campaign was raising the money. See Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, p. 43.
[129] The idea is formulated by Robert T. Holt in *Radio Free Europe*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), p. 200.
[130] For details about the RFE Romanian Unit, see Csaba Szilágyi, "Records of the Romanian Unit" in Leszek Pudlowski and Ivan Szekely (eds.), *Open Society Archives* (Budapest: Open Society Archives at Central European University, 1999), p. 65-68.
[131] OSA website: http://www.osaarchivum.org/archival-catalog. [Last acessed February 17, 2015].

And thirdly, some of the data in this chapter was gathered from the RFE/RL digitized documents, available in the *Information Items* section.[132] While studying the *News from Behind the Iron Curtain* collection and the *Weekly Information Letters,* I looked at the way in which the Western broadcaster portrayed the Romanian armed resistance movement. In the last section, I combined sources from the RFE archive with information from the Securitate files and oral history interviews on the topic.

My first word filter during the online research on the OSA website was "Romania." Due to the vast amount of materials listed under this criterion (e.g. 1076 archival boxes in the Romanian Unit – Communism and Cold War) I added other filtering keywords. The ones that turned out to be more useful were *resistance*, *secret police*, *prisons*, *camps*, *Făgăraş*, and *peasants*. I did not study all documents generated under these searches, but particularly those linked to armed resistance. As a working method, I compared the RFE accounts on the topic with the Securitate documents of the early 1950s, and with different works on Romanian resistance, looking for contradictions, similarities, and gaps. Just like in the case of the Securitate Archives, my goal was also to analyze the RFE archives as "ethnographic objects." Exploring the RFE files beyond their content reveals information about the producers of the archives and about their understanding of key terms like *secrecy*, *source*, *justice*, *evidence,* and *resistance*.

Finally, a significant detail is that the OSA Archivum in Budapest holds only a part of the RFE and RL archives, namely the documents produced by the RFE/RL Research Institute. The administrative records and broadcasting transcripts of the Radio's programs are managed

[132] See http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:484d852e-1334-4570-a2be-e41230b9e36a and http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:6f4d954a-481d-4e85-af9c-5af1cebee9a9. [Last accessed: February 19, 2015].

by the Hoover Institution at Stanford.[133] This leads to a limitation of this research: the conclusions are based only on materials available in Budapest.

2.1. News from behind the Iron Curtain: reports on the Romanian armed resistance

Demonized by the communist propaganda, the Romanian armed resistance legitimize itself throughout the Western broadcaster's anti-communist discourse. In 1950, when armed resistance phenomenon reached its peak, Radio Free Europe aired its first program in Romanian.[134] During the years to come, foreign radio programs—produced by Radio Free Europe, BBC or Voice of America—were targeted by the partisans and their supporters, on the one hand, and by the Securitate, on the other hand.

In order to fight back the "imperialist programs," the Communist Party started a "radiofication" program within the country, installing radio devices in households and in public spaces. Through this tool, the state propaganda could have been efficiently spread. Mocking the foreign broadcasters was part of the party-controlled media's activity insofar as the radios abroad were condemning the communist regime.[135] At the same time, there were sanctions for the citizens who listened to "imperialist" programs (and later for those who tried to contact the producers of such programs). As a Greek refugee who lived in Romania told

[133] For a description of the OSA materials on the topic and the missing part of the RFE archive see Leszek Pudlowski and Ivan Szekely (eds.), *Open Society Archives*, pp. 46-48. According to the Hoover Institution webpage, the American Archive hosts the corporate and the broadcast records of the RFE (some 11,000 liner feet). No documents had been made available online by May 2015. See online description of the archive: http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?style=oac4;docId=kt996nd6jz and http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?style=oac4;docId=kt4489q9wz [Last accessed: May 13, 2015].

[134] The first RFE program in Romanian was broadcasted on July 14, 1950. See Nestor Ratesh, "Radio Free Europe's Impact in Romania During the Cold War," A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta (eds.) *Cold War Broadcasting. Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Budapest-New-York: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 206.

[135] Nestor Ratesh analyzes the impact of Radio Free Europe in Romania in the early 1950s. He refers to the Romanian Communist Party leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej who was reading and annotating the transcripts of RFE's programs in the early 1950s, while engaging in a "neurotic chitchat" with the papers. See Nestor Ratesh, "Radio Free Europe's Impact in Romania During the Cold War," pp. 211-212.

RFE in 1954, "there existed a law or decree providing for the punishment of those who repeated or discussed the contents of any Western broadcast."[136] Opponents of the regime saw the foreign stations as surrogate national programs and as *the real* source of information, but also as supporters of the resistance. Even though the audience was limited at the beginning—due to jamming and a shortage of radio receivers—the RFE Romanian service got eventually the highest number of listeners of all RFE and RL departments.[137]

In the Făgăraș region, in the early 1950s, people were already arrested for "the crime of listening to imperialist radios."[138] For instance, a Securitate informant reported in 1950 about the father of a partisan: "Victor Metea is an inveterate enemy of the regime. He is listening to foreign radio programs. He does not talk with party members. He claims that the Americans will come."[139] Another Securitate report related to the Făgăraș Group and produced at the beginning of 1950 states that: "Voice of America and Radio London have many listeners in the Făgăraș County and the psychosis of an alleged war that is to be won by the imperialist camp—as these radios claim—created a favorable space to resistance."[140] Up until 1956, the partisans themselves have had galena radio-receivers in the mountains.[141] How often did "imperialist journalists" speak about the Romanian armed resistance? What were their sources? What reliable information is there in this counter-propaganda discourse?

[136] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 1550/55, HU OSA 300-1-2-55794, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:2eacad84-540b-4554-90e2-b08d87f85c51 [Last accessed: February 20, 2015].

[137] An analysis of the Romanian Department's audience is published by Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, pp. 239-240. For information related to the jamming of Western broadcasters' programs to the Soviet block, see George W. Woodard, "Cold War Radio Jamming," in A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta (eds.) *Cold War Broadcasting*, pp. 51-63.

[138] The term often appears in the Securitate files linked to people who were followed or arrested during the 1950s. See note CNSAS Archive, Dosar p. 1210, p. 299.

[139] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar 84.687, vol. 122, p. 23.

[140] CNSAS Archive, dosar penal 1210, vol. 3, p. 58.

[141] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, pp. 49-50, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol II (Baia Mare: Marist, 2009), pp. 4, 9-10 and Dorin Dobrincu, *Rezistența armată anticomunista din Romania (1944 - inceputul anilor '60) [Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Romania (1944-the beginning of the '60]* (PhD diss., University Al I. Cuza Iasi, 2006), p. 473. See also CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, p. 299.

During the 1950s, RFE/RL Research Institute produced a large amount of materials related to political, social, and cultural issues in Romania. However, the topic of armed resistance was not very often mentioned. One source explored during this research is *News from Behind the Iron* collection, a monthly publication of the National Committee for a Free Europe, produced and distributed between January 1952 and December 1959 to a limited list of RFE contacts. The most consistent report on Romanian armed resistance was published in December 1952.[142] Under the title "Partisan Bands," the publication presents a monitoring of the Romanian state press, which announced "over 8000 trials [during the year 1952] of 'kulaks' charged with sabotaging agricultural production."[143] The RFE report asserts that many peasants who opposed collectivization "often take to the woods and form bands seeking revenge against those who persecuted them." Citing "exiles"—vague references were common, since sources sought protection—the authors state that casualties among these groups and the troops sent to arrest them are "relatively high." A look at the language used in the article shows that the communist propaganda might have reached the Western counter-discourse: the anti-communist groups are called "bands," a term refuted by the Romanian fighters in the mountains. As discussed in the previous chapter, partisans from both the northern and the southern side of the Făgăraș Mountains often accused the Communist representatives of using the pejorative term "band" in order to discredit the movement.[144] The usage of the same term in official RFE messages can be a sign of disconnection or detachment from the Romanian sensibilities on the topic.

The report published in December 1952 by *News from the Iron Curtain* points out that the state-controlled Romanian press did not publish any information related to armed

[142] OSA Archivum, HU-OSA 300-8-24, Box 1, *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, December 1952, vol 1, no. 12.
[143] Ibidem.
[144] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki, *Brazii se frâng,* vol III, p. 358 and Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, p. 328.

resistance during 1952, "in contrast to 1950 and 1951, when the Communists gave considerable publicity to the repression of active resistance."[145] Also no partisan trials or arrests were mentioned in the Communist mass-media, the RFE author stresses. The article notes that in 1952 the regime set a 5000 lei reward for any information that could lead to arrest of a partisan. At that time, the price of a good calf in Romania was around 1000 lei, which means that the reward was more than a poor family of peasants could ever have in cash and a very tempting amount of money for an average family of workers.[146] Regarding the composition of the "bands," RFE cites various foreign sources—such as Radio Belgrade and Yugoslav accounts—pointing to desertions from the Romanian Army. Some of the deserter soldiers were thought to have crossed the border to Yugoslavia, some others were killed, and another part "took to the woods and joined other groups already there." A different statement given to RFE by a Romanian former border guard in 1956 describes armed resistance as formed mainly by "ex-officers of the Royal Army."[147] These accounts confirm earlier reports produced by the Romanian political police, which argued that some of the partisans arrested between 1944 and 1950 were indeed former Army staff. However, the percentage attributed to them was only around 2%.[148] Either RFE did not have the actual figures, or the Radio staff thought that it was important to hint at the fact that military professionals were part of the resistance, regardless of their number. In the case of the Făgăraș Group, only one member was a former soldier who deserted while doing his mandatory military service.[149]

No other consistent accounts of Romanian armed resistance were published until 1955, when the Făgăraș Group was annihilated, neither in the *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*

[145] OSA Archivum, HU-OSA 300-8-24, Box 1, News from Behind the Iron Curtain, December 1952, vol 1, no. 12.
[146] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, p. 46.
[147] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 3624/56, HU OAS 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:c09ca6cb-db70-4357-b0a6-16c9c7677416, pp 4-5, [Last accessed: February 20, 2015]
[148] See Dorin Dobrincu, "Historicizing a Disputed Theme," p. 332.
[149] Toma Pirău was the only former soldier in the Făgăraș Group. He decided to join resistance while on leave from mandatory military service. See Chapter I, subchapter 2, "Who were the bandits?"

collection, nor in the *Weekly Information Letters*.[150] Besides the content of the documents, the lack of reports on the Romanian armed resistance during the early to mid 1950s, when open movements against the regime reached a peak, can have different interpretations. One possible reading would be that the editors of the RFE/RL Research Institute did not have much information on the topic or did not have reliable sources. It could also mean that Radios' staff did not find it important to detail the subject of the resistance in the mountains. This could be because resistance in Romania was not considered to be *efficient*, as a CIA report pointed out in 1949.[151] The document concluded that Romanian opposition against communists was not coordinated and that there were no conditions for an efficient resistance within the country. Accordingly, representatives from the RFE/RL Research Institute stressed in 1956 that information on Romanian armed resistance "was sometimes regarded with skepticism in the West."[152] The evaluation appears in a document which contains the summary of an interview about anti-communist resistance in Transylvania, given by a former border guard who fled the country in September 1955. The unknown RFE author of the document—both the interviewer and the interviewee's names were protected in such reports—stressed, however, that "one should remember that recently [1955] even the Romanian Regime thought it necessary to produce a film on armed resistance, called *Alarm into the*

[150] OSA Archivum, *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, HU-OSA: 300-8-52.
[151] The Romanian Foundation Civic Academy published a CIA report issued on the 5th of October 1949 for the use of the American president Harry S. Truman. The document was aimed at reflecting the political situation in Romania. In a chapter named "Groups of Resistance," the American experts announced that: "There is no information to indicate the existence or formation of efficient opposition, organized in the form of groups of resistance. The absolute police power of the Government is enough to discourage persons or groups capable of organizing and conducting such actions." The report added that in January 1949 the death penalty was introduced in the Romanian Penal Code, which offered the Government real power in annihilating any attempt of rebellion. The conclusion was that: "the coordination of various groups and the formation of coherent resistance are impossible in current conditions." Armed resistance in the mountains is not mentioned. Either it was not considered important to be mentioned, or the author did not have information on this topic. See Thomas S. Blanton, *Ce știa presedintele Truman despre România. Un raport al serviciilor secrete americane - 1949 [What Did the President Truman Know about Romania. A Report of the American Secret Services - 1949]* (București: Fundația Academia Civică, 2013), p. 31.
[152] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 3624/56, HU OAS 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:c09ca6cb-db70-4357-b0a6-16c9c7677416 [Last accessed: February 20, 2015], p.1.

Mountains."[153] The adding information was meant to support the idea that armed resistance was still a reality, since the regime was fighting against it through propaganda movies.

2.2. Romanian refugees about the Făgăraș Resistance

Romanian refugees were an important source of information for the RFE Research Institute. People who fled the country were interviewed usually in refugee camps or RFE offices around Europe; the records and summaries of the dialogs were then archived and used as background information. These files, digitized by the OSA Archive, are not mere journalistic interviews, but rather ideological and political exchange of information between people with different purposes and agendas. The interviewer was employee of a political American institution, looking for information about a part of Europe hardly accessible in terms of sources. The interviewee, on the other hand, was a refugee looking for political asylum in the Western world. It is probably fair to assume that it was in the advantage of the latter to emphasize the communist repression. This is not to say that the material does not reflect the reality, but its bias should be taken into account.

Although the corporate archive of the RFE/RL Research Institute could have been a valuable piece of the puzzle, there are other sources of information hinting at how the interviews with refugees where conducted. After the end of the World War II, the U.S. administration launched major projects aimed at penetrating the Iron Curtain and gathering information about life and politics in the Soviet sphere. Two such programs based on interviews with refugees were the Harvard Project on the Social Soviet System (HPSSS) and the Columbia Research Project Hungary (CRPH). The former was also known as the Harvard Refugee Interview Project and was developed in 1950 by sociologist Alex Inkeles and social psychologist Raymond Bauer. The method was based on oral interviews conducted by

[153] Ibidem.

Russian-speaking representatives of the Harvard University Russian Research Center.[154] The HPSSS Collection available online on the webpage of Harvard College Library presents some 700 interviews and guidelines for interviewers, these documents offer an insight on what kind of questions were asked, with what purpose, and how information was interpreted.[155] The latter project addressed the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and was conducted by researchers from another American academic institution, Columbia University.[156] Both projects show that the interviews with European refugees were not spontaneous dialogues between random people from different sides of the Iron Curtain. The process of collecting data was based on various types of questionnaires developed by scholars engaged in the projects.[157]

Besides the methodology used and beyond its biases and flaws, the stories told by the interviewees were subjective narrations based on personal experience, intermediate information, or rumors. As in any interview, the construction of the story might have been influenced by the questions asked, the emotional situation of the persons engaged in dialog, and the relationship between the informant and the interviewer. All are factors that can hardly

[154] Inkes and Bauer published various analyzes discussing the outcome of their method. The studies Reveal how researchers interpreted data and how the image of the Soviet system was constructed based on the information gathered from refugees. See Alex Inkles and Raymond A. Bauer, *The Soviet Citizen; Daily Life in a Totalitarian Society*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); Peter H. Rossi and Raymond A. Bauer, "Some Patterns of Soviet Communications Behavior,"in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Special Issue on Internațional Communications Research (Winter, 1952-1953), pp. 653-666; Raymond A. Bauer and David B. Gleicher, "Word-of-Mouth Communication in the Soviet Union" in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Autumn, 1953), pp. 297-310; Raymond A. Bauer, "Some Trends in Sources of Alienation from the Soviet System," in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Autumn, 1955), pp. 279-291.

[155] The Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System Collection can be accessed online: http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/. A *Guide for Interviewing Soviet Escapees* published in 1953 by the Human Resources Research Institute of Maxwell Air Force Base (Alabama) was classified as "information affecting the național defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws." The manual presents the first analysis on the practices used for gahtering information from Russian refugees. It is available online: http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/5420185?n=1&imagesize=1200&jp2Res=0.5&printThumbnails=no. [Both webpages were last accessed on May 13, 2015].

[156] See András Mink,"1956 Hungarian Refugee Interviews at OSA Archivum, Budapest," available online: http://w3.osaarchivum.org/digitalarchive/blinken/curph.pdf [Last accessed May 13, 2015]. English transcripts of the interviews conducted with Hungarian as part of the CURPH were digitized and made available online by the OSA Archivum: http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:ea9bfcca-2dd5-4da8-b6a4-74871c5373f4 [Last accessed: May 13, 2015].

[157] István Rév traces back to 1942 the trajectory of scholars engaged in later American intelligence projects related to the Cold War. See István Rév, "The Unnoticed Continuity: The Prehistory of the Hungarian Refugee Interview Project": http://w3.osaarchivum.org/digitalarchive/blinken/The_Unnoticed_Continuity.pdf [Last accessed May 13, 2015].

be contained.[158] As Istvan Rev points out, the escapees themselves were in most cases listeners of the RFE/RL, which means that their concepts of communism and anti-communism were to some extent shaped by the foreign broadcasters that were then using them as a source of information.[159] Given these points, while analyzing the interviews, regardless of the project in which they were involved, it is useful to look also at the context in which they were produced and at meaning behind content, not only to analyze the truthfulness of the information.

Among other reports, The *Information Item* collection comprises interviews with Romanian citizens who (legally or illegally) fled the country. There are no transcripts, but only summaries of discussions; the questions never appear on the report. The name or the background of the interviewee is also not revealed. Hence, it is impossible to find out if there were any refugees from the Făgăraș region. However, all documents include some details about the source (without identification data). Here are some examples of such descriptions: "an Italian citizen expelled from Romania," "a 38 year old emigrant," "a regular RFE stringer," "a lady refugee who was active in the field of social welfare." Even though the identity of every source was always protected, there are some reports without any kind of detail on the interviewee. Near "source" it was written "confidential". In this, RFE's *informants* and Securitate's *informers* have something in common: even though they had different roles and their identity was protected for different reasons, they were all categorized without their knowledge on different levels of secrecy. They were the primary sources of two antagonistic discourses. Within Romania, the *informers* of the political police supported the communist propaganda, which demonized the partisans and called them members of "terrorist

[158] See Joan Scott, "Experience" in Judith Butler and Joan Scott (eds.) *Feminists Theorize the Political* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 22-41.

[159] István Rév discusses the biases and limitations of the projects based on interviews with refugees citing, among others, the analysis of Siegfried Kracauer and Paul L. Berkman, published in 1956. See István Rév, "Just Noise? Impact of Radio Free Europe in Hungary," in A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta (eds.) *Cold War Broadcasting*, pp. 239-257.

bands." On the other side of the Iron Curtain, *informants* of RFE/RL continued the resistance by providing information for the Western propaganda discourse, which encouraged resistance and praised opponents.

A section of the interview reports called "evaluation comment" indicates if the source was considered to be reliable and if the information provided seemed accurate. The accuracy was usually checked by comparing a new story with other information on the same topic. While interpreting these documents, one needs to remember that facts could not be checked from independent/primary sources. In some cases, different information was considered reliable only because many people gave the same account on the topic. Over time, some of this information turned out to be wrong. It does not necessary mean that the sources were lying, but they themselves had limited access to information on resistance, due to political censorship. Everything related to the resistance was hidden and distorted by the state propaganda.

Analyzing interviews with Romanian refugees, one notices that many of them mention the Făgăraș Mountains when talking about armed resistance. Even though people have little information, some knew that there was a group of partisans active there. A Romanian "38 year old immigrant" asserted that:

> In April 1952 four Romanian soldiers were shot in the mountains of Făgăraș in Transylvania. Partisans sent a message to the Romanian Communist Army to come up into the mountains and fetch the bodies. A few searches were conducted, but the cautious soldiers all came back empty-handed.[160]

The account is rather an exaggeration, since during the five years in the mountains, the partisans were never reported to have killed four soldiers.[161] Another source interviewed in

[160] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 9064/52, HU OSA 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:78d6746e-a20f-444d-91b9-98911e3c61b1, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].

[161] At the trial in 1957, the prosecutors counted nine "crimes of killing" ["crime de omor"] committed by the partisans during the years spent in the mountains, while clashing with the Securitate troops. However, none of them fits the description. See Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența Armată anticomunistă din Muntii Făgăraş," p. 482.

1953 stated that "the groups of Romanian partisans who are in the Hunedoara and the Făgăraș mountains (above all in the latter part) are causing serious trouble and a lot of headaches for the government."[162] The RFE employee who summed up the interview added:

> We have learned from our source that the government employs means to fight the partisans, and dead militiamen are continually found at the foot of the mountains. For this reason the militiamen are afraid to shoot at the partisans, even if they are convinced Communists.[163]

The information was probably exaggerated, for the partisans were confronting a lack of ammunition. They usually avoided open confrontation with the Securitate forces or with the soldiers sent the fetch them: one of their strategies was to never be the first who open the fire.[164] Even if the information provided in this report is not novel for the RFE, the document bears a special note: "Limited distribution. Read and Destroy." The order was obviously not completed, since I am citing the document. It was probably the position of the source that required this kind of special treatment, as some details at the beginning of the report suggest: "Regular RFE stringer from an employee of a foreign Legation in Bucharest. This information was obtained from a close friend who has spoken directly to the Lieutenant."[165] The organizational flaw may indicate that the documents were handled by many persons, in different offshoots. Therefore, even in the case of strict recommendation, at least one copy got lost in the system.

In 1955, a refugee described as "a Greek-Romanian repatriated" informed RFE that *guerilla groups* of armed resistance still operate in the regions of Caransebeș and Făgăraș Mountains. Later historiographical works note that the groups in the mountains carried indeed a guerilla fight, as this interviewee pointed out: "Whenever workers from his Ministry [of

[162] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 9064/52, HU OSA 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:aafa21f2-86e0-477b-842f-ec7b6feb78bf [Last accessed February 20, 2015].
[163] Ibidem.
[164] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, p. 337.
[165] Ibidem. See also Dorin Dobrincu *Rezistența armată anticomunista,* (PhD diss.), p. 443.

Constructions] went to these mountains, they were protected by significant contingents of militia aimed at defending the convoy against any possible guerilla attacks."[166] The source concluded that armed anti-communist groups still existed, but they were small and their activity was limited. It is fair information, considering that many partisan groups had been caught by the time this report was given. In the same year, 1954, RFE received the first mention of helicopters used to monitor the situation in the mountains:

> Soviet troops are camped in the forests of the Raznov valley, near Stalin (Brasov). Mountaineers have been forbidden to climb to the peak of Mount Omul, in the Carpathians, because an air raid observation post is located there; the post is supplied by helicopter.[167]

The use of helicopters was mentioned both by peasants living in villages near the mountains (Omul is the highest peak) and by the Securitate reports.[168]

Even in the absence of the RFE corporate archive (partly declassified and managed by the Hoover Institution), the documents themselves speak about the identity of the ones who produced them. It seems like some interviews were conducted by Romanian employees (or at least by fluent speakers) since they use Romanian spelling of names and places, even when the documents are written in English or in French. In other cases, the only typos that appear are precisely in the case of Romanian words. For example, Rîșnov town becomes Raznov in the document cited above. In another English report, Făgăraș was spelled Gafarasi, whereas a French summary of a separate dialog refers to the inexistent town of Ragaras. They could be just typos, but considering the fact that these are the only spelling mistakes, they could as well indicate that some interviews were not conducted by native Romanian employees; the authors were not familiar with the language and maybe with the background of the country.

[166] [166] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 9658/54, HU OSA 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:2ec43bc4-d832-405a-b369-4a58f74ef9e8, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].
[167] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 2739/54, HU OSA 300-1-2 http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:3f994483-ae59-432d-bb58-c19b6196c074, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].
[168] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 18, p. 339. See also Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, p. 6.

Among the reports with respect to the resistance in the mountains collected in early 1950s, there are some very optimistic statements, such as the one provided by an Italian citizen, expelled from Romania in 1951. The source asserted that: The partisans have managed to win the favor of the whole population. They have excellent informants among the farmers, wood-cutters, forest guards and even among the soldiers and militiamen themselves."[169] The information is evaluated by RFE as "in line with similar reports." A "lady refugee" interviewed in 1952 insisted that "Even though there are no known cases, it is said that students from high schools and universities are in contact with the partisans who hid in the mountains."[170] *Miscellaneous News Items* form 1953 provided by a "confidential source" claim that "resistance is a reality and may become active anywhere."[171] Some final information on the same line: "The population has never missed a chance to help the partisans, even an Army colonel whose name we prefer not to disclose but who is a good friend of our source, mailed some food-packages intended for the partisans."[172] During the mid to late 1950s, reports on Romanian armed resistance are more reserved. Sources mention *skepticism* with respect to the outcome of the resistance and *rumors* rather than information. Some define the actions of the partisans as *extremely limited*.[173]

Information given by Romanian refugees to RFE interviewers can be interpreted as an indicator of the state of spirit in the country among those who opposed the regime. During the

[169] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 2527/52 , HU OSA 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:2a409c95-402c-45fa-9577-3d7a5249087c, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].
[170] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 8574/52 , HU OSA 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:c78d7c59-9359-4d1b-a1b5-6b13d5c35173, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].
[171] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 9821/53 , HU OSA 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:7a918288-d1aa-4930-8788-48c6e17477ec, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].
[172] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No. 9835/54 , HU OSA 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:f1948099-9154-4aaf-b7b8-55f853bb1b50, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].
[173] See OSA Archivum, Electonic Records, HU OSA 300-1-2: Item No. 2001/55, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:b6c32503-2285-41aa-a2f4-89b45656c916 and Item no 3624/56, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:c09ca6cb-db70-4357-b0a6-16c9c7677416, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].

late 1940s and the early 1950s, refugees seemed optimistic and credited armed resistance, stating that it is well-known and supported by the general population. In the same period, some RFE publications noted the phenomenon of resistance in the mountains in detail. In contrast with these cheerful notes, reports from mid to late 1950s show that people did not have much information about the groups of armed resistance. A musician who left Romania in 1955 concluded: "People lost their hope of being liberated in a near future."[174] It was during that year that the Făgăraș Group was finally annihilated by the Securitate, after the partisans tried to leave the country. This marked the beginning of the end of Romanian armed anti-communist resistance and the somber atmosphere of this stage was reflected both by the RFE programs and by the refugees' accounts.

The large amount of interviews conducted by RFE with Romanian immigrants show that they were a valuable—even though not always reliable—source of information. Despite efforts to build up a proper methodology for interviewing refugees on the other side of the Iron Curtain, it was difficult-to-impossible to determine what was true and what was fiction in the reports. Overall, the personal accounts of Romanian fugitives were considered *evidence* to be analyzed and compared with other similar *evidence* – that is, with parallel interviews. In essence, this is not very much different from the routine of the secret police apparatus that used to validate information by confronting accounts. However, the means, the methods of interpretation, and the purpose of RFE discourse are different from the abusive practices of the Securitate. There were situations in which the same "sources" were claimed by both sides: by the political police and by the Western intelligence. The next section explores the history of the so-called "American spies" who, under the threat of becoming Securitate *informers*, decided to flee and become *informants* of the American forces.

[174] OSA Archivum, Electronic Record, Item No.1101/55, HU OSA 300-1-2, http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:69a29bb2-8bff-485b-89f5-df70bd0d79a6, [Last accessed February 20, 2015].

2.3. The "American spies:" gaps and traps in their files

As shown in the previous sections, both the Securitate files and the Radio Free Europe archive have inconsistencies. By confronting the two archival systems, gaps can be filled in, especially when a historiographic event is reflected by both corpus data. Such examples are the American military missions in Eastern Europe, organized by the US intelligence outside Romania and targeted by the political police within the country. This subchapter explores the case of three men who left Romania and were recruited by the Americans who trained them for an espionage operation. They were parachuted back so that they should get in contact with the Făgăraș Group. Twenty-five years after the fall of communism, their story has the aura of a legend, due to the secrecy that surrounded the operation.

In the early 1950s, RFE/RL Research Institute published some articles in the monthly journal *News from Behind the Iron Curtain* with respect to the American operations in the Soviet Block. The purpose was to inform about the undercover actions, but also to monitor the state-controlled media in the communist countries and their reports on the topic. A report published in February 1952 entitled "Terrorists Spies, Diversionists... " announces that "[d]during the closing weeks of 1951 and the beginning of 1952 a Communist propaganda campaign of unprecedented bitterness and intensity was launched against the United States."[175] All governments of the Soviet Block, the article reveals, "staged show-case trials of 'spies' in the service of the American espionage network." Among the cases discussed is Romania. Four "American spies" trained by the US intelligence had been parachuted in Romania from a plane which took off from Greece. All men were caught and executed – the author claims.

[175] See "Terrorists, Spies, Diversionists..." in *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, February 1952, vol. 1, nr. 2, pp. 1-5, HU OSA 300-8-24, box 1, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Libery, Publications Department, News from Behind the Iron Curtain, Archival boxes, OSA Achivum, Budapest.

The story presented by the RFE journal is not singular, for in the early 1950s, the Americans conducted various operations aimed at parachuting back onto their home countries East-European refugees. The agency responsible for recruiting and training people for operations behind the Iron Curtain was the Office of Police Coordination (OPC), created in 1948 with the aim of conducting secret psychological and paramilitary operations in the context of the Cold War.[176] A secret operation called *Sons of the Motherland* [*Fiii Patriei*] was launched in 1952 at an American military base in France with the purpose of making a link between the Făgăraș Group and Western intelligence. An analysis of this failed operation shows how Romanian escapees became an active part of the counter-propaganda discourse while trying to fight against the Romanian communist regime. This case reveals also the gaps and—at the same time—the complementarities of archival sources on the topic.

Records about the "American spies" who wanted to help the Făgăraș Group are scattered between various institutions in and outside Romania. Before 2012, the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive in Bucharest offered nothing on the name of people who participated in this operation.[177] In August 2012, some files were declassified. According to these documents, the head of the operation *Sons of the Motherland* was Captain Sabin Mare (see Fig. 9).[178]

[176] See Elizabeth W. Hazard, *Cold War Crucible: United States Foreign Policy and the Conflict in Romania, 1943-1953* (East European Monographs, 1996), pp. 193-195.

[177] When a researcher orders a file concerning a particular person and receives the answer that there is nothing under that name, there can be various explanations: such file does not exist (for it never existed or it was destroyed), the file is still classified (hence is not available), or the documents are in the custody of other state institutions (that can offer them for study or not). However, the researcher does not get any explanation beyond the "no" response.

[178] Cpt. Sabin Mare (August 17 or 20, 1920 - August 17, 1953) was born in a village near Satu Mare, in northern Romania to a family of intellectuals. His parents and his five sisters were teachers; he also had two brothers: a physician and an accountant. Cpt. Mare was sent to the Făgăraș Military Garrison after the World War II and he lived in the town until he left the country.

Living in Făgăraș, Sabin Mare arose the suspicions of the Securitate for two reasons. First, he had an "unhealthy origin," since he was coming from a "petit bourgeois family," as the Securitate labeled it.[179] Second, the Captain left the Romanian Army, after King Michael I was forced to abdicate. Therefore, he became a "dubious element." The first contradictions in Mare's political dossier appear on his profile file [fișa personală]. Some documents state that he *resigned* from the Army, while others claim that he *was dismissed* for having "a hostile attitude towards the democratic regime."[180] This just confirms a feature of the political files, which sometimes recorded what happened and some other times what the Securitate wished it had happened. If someone resigned or committed suicide, for instance, it meat that the regime did not have the last word; hence, often the facts were a bit changed in later reports. However, Mare's descendants state that after communism came into power the Captain *quit* his job, refusing to be part of an Army no longer led by King Michael, to whom he was loyal.[181]

Fig. 9. Cpt. Sabin Mare. Not dated. CNSAS Archive.

Sabin Mare was vaguely mentioned in the Securitate files related to the first trial of the partisans, in 1951.[182] Some of the arrested who helped the Făgăraș Group called him "the Captain," whereas others referred to him as "Mr. Someone" [Nea' Cutare]; they claimed that

[179] See CNSAS Archive Dosar Informativ 310459, pp. 6-7.
[180] Ibidem, p. 74.
[181] Between November 2012 and October 2013 I had email conversations with Valeria Mare, the daughter-in-law of Sabin Mare and her son, Octavian-Valeriu Mare, the grandson of Cpt. Sabin Mare. Living in Germany, they are the only direct living descendants of the family. They kindly shared their memories and commented a draft of Sabin Mare's story that I wrote in 2013 (the material was not published). According to them, Sabin Mare had been a class colleague of King Michael of Romania at the Infantry School in Bucharest. When the King was forced to abdicate, Sabin Mare left the Army as a form of protest. Similar decisions took other Army cadres around the country.
[182] The general files on the name of the partisans are available for researchers since 2000, as opposed to the ones declassified in the summer of 2012.

they did not know who he was, besides the fact that he was an important supporter of the partisans.[183] The trial in 1957 offered some more details on the topic: the partisans explained that he had helped them with military equipment, ammunition, money, food, information, and a mimeograph they used to produce some anti-communist flyers in 1950.[184] The partisans also admitted that Cpt. Mare fled Romania in order to send their message to the Western intelligence and then return with help. He was supposed to be parachuted back with information and new plans for the resistance, which he did, but he was caught. The members of the Făgăraș Group did not seem to know—or they did not say—how he left and why, what happened outside the country and when he got back. The files rather raise more questions than what they answer.

Securitate dossiers made available in the summer of 2012 shed some more light on the topic. Three political files on the name of the three people who took part in the operation "Sons of the Motherland" were declassified.[185] However, they cover only the period previous to their departure from Romania. According to these documents, Sabin Mare got in contact with members of the Făgăraș Group in 1950. During the fall, he was arrested and confronted with information proving his support for the partisans. High rank Securitate staff reports that: "after being interrogated and seriously beaten, Sabin Mare was offered the opportunity of becoming an informer." Under pressure, on September 8, 1950, Sabin Mare signed a commitment [angajament] promising that he would go out and set a meeting with the partisans then let the political police know the details.[186] A few days later, he left Romania to the surprise of his family. The Securitate intercepted letters sent by his wife to his parents and

[183] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 1210, vol. 3, p. 58.
[184] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 1, p. 205, 254; vol. 5, pp. 39-40.
[185] The three files declassified in August 2012 and available at the CNSAS Archive are: Dosar Informativ 310459, Dosar Informativ 310460, and Dosar Informativ 212009.
[186] See CNSAS Archive Dosar Informativ 310459, pp. 111-112.

Fig. 10. Sabin Mare and Eva Embacher – wedding photograph (Făgăraș, January 1945). CNSAS Archive.

siblings asking if they knew anything about him.[187] Sabin's spouse Eva Embacher and her father Friedrich Embacher, became the target of the Securitate (See Fig. 10). The Captain's four-year-old son Octavian Mare also had a Securitate personal file with just a few lines written: "petit bourgeois, currently attends kindergarden."[188] The history of the Embacher family before and after Sabin Mare's departure could make a case in itself, but that would be another topic.[189]

Aged 30, Sabin Mare somehow managed to cross the Romanian border at the end of 1950. From Yugoslavia he went to a refugee camp in Austria, where he was recruited by the American intelligence, who were conducting interviews with the Romanian escapees. Considered trustful, Cpt. Mare was sent in 1952 to an American military base in France where he was introduced to other two young men who had defected from Romania and who wanted to be parachuted back. One of them was Ilie Rada (29 years),

[187] Letters sent by Eva to Sabin Mare's parents and sisters were intercepted and trascribed. Correspondence between Eva and Sabin previous to his arrest can be also found in the Securitate archive. See CNSAS Archive Dosar Informativ 310459 pp. 114-115, 117.

[188] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 310459, p. 11, 190.

[189] Friedrich Embacher (born February 16, 1890), Mare's father-in-law, owned in Făgăraș one of the most famous pastry shops in Romania at the time. He was also one of the official sweets provider of the Royal family. Of Austriac origins, he settled in Făgăraș before the World War I. The pastry chef's only daughter, Eva (born March 12, 1928), married Sabin Mare in January 1945, after the officer risked his position in order to save her at the last moment from being deported to Siberia along with other Saxons from Transylvania. After Sabin Mare left the country, Eva was forced to divorce him. All properties of her father (the pastry shop included) were confiscated some weeks after the Captain left. Friedrich Embacher, his daughter and nephew lived with friends, under surveillance. Marginalized, the woman finally found a job in constructions. In 1987, Eva Embacher left Romania. Her son Octavian Mare (born April 29, 1946) and his family joined her in 1990. Eva died in 2000 in Heidelberg and her son Octavian Mare died in 2006 in Schonbrunn, Germany. None of them came to know why Cpt. Mare left home in December 1950, when he came back and how he died. According to the Securitate files, they were constantly followed and their correspondence was checked until the fall of the regime.

a former Securitate employee until he saw the abuses of the regime and decided to leave the country and join the fight against communism.[190] The other one was Gavrilă Pop (24 years), a peasant from northern Romania who escaped after the Securitate started to harass him because "he likes elegant cloths and he is wearing long hair like a bourgeois; he never saw with good eyes our regime."[191] None of the three Romanians who met for the first time in France were ever involved in politics, according to the political police.

The Securitate files do not document the period after the "spies" left the country, but only the repression against their families. What happened in France is recollected by Neagu Djuvara, who was working for the American intelligence abroad and who was in charge with the training of the three "spies."[192] A contributor of Radio Free Europe, Djuvara participated in the training of Mare, Rada, and Pop:

> At the end of the instruction, I left with the three of them and some French trainers in central France (Massif Central), near the Mountain Gerbier de Jonc, at the bottom of which Loara sets, in an almost deserted region, where we had together several parachuting exercises.[193]

After the training, the refugees were taken to an American base in Greece and during the summer of 1953 they were parachuted in Romania. In October, the trainer Djuvara was informed that the parachuted were captured. "'Ils ont été pris' [They were caught] - that is

[190] Ilie Rada was born on February 10, 1923 in Albești - Bihor County (Western part of Romania). He was a Securitate second lieutenant in Oradea. According to his political files, he fled the country in 1949, while in a work mission, piloting a Securitate helicopter. He was supposed to transport the political files of some partisans from Oradea to Sighet, but he changed the route and landed in Yugoslavia. He went then to a refugee camp in Austria or Germany in order to get in contact with the Americans. Just like Sabin Mare, after being recruited, Rada was sent to the American military base in France. See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 310459, pp. 140-145.

[191] Gavrilă Pop was born on October 17, 1928 in Pir, Maramureș region (at the Romanian border to Ukraine). His Securitate files do not offer much information about his motivations for leaving the country and the reason why he accepted to be parachuted back. For his Securitate file, see CNSAS Archive Dosar Informativ 212009.

[192] Neagu Djuvara (born August 18, 1916) is a Romanian historian, novelist and diplomat, descendant of an aristocratic family who left Romania during World War I. In the 1950s, he worked for the UN Internațional Refugee Organization and with the Romanian National Committee, an anti-communist organization of Romanians in exile. Between 1947 and 1961, he lived in France. Official webpage: http://neagudjuvara.ro/.

[193] Neagu Djuvara, *Amintiri din pribegie* [*Memories from Exile*], (București: Humanitas, 2011), pp. 106-107.

what a French colleague told me. I still live with the guilt of having sent to death innocent people. To this day, I don't know what happened to them and to their families."[194]

In fact, the three "spies" were parachuted onto Romania, near the northern border, in June 1953. By mid August, they were annihilated, in circumstances that are still unclear. Gavrilă Pop was arrested a few days after they landed, while he was trying to get in contact with his family. On the 17th of August 1953 Sabin Mare was reported dead.[195] Some Securitate reports state that he was shot dead, not far from the place where he was parachuted, whereas other documents claim that he committed suicide when he realized that he was surrendered by Army troops. Ilie Rada managed to escape alone and illegally cross the border to Yugoslavia one more time. He eventually got in contact with his trainers in France and explained how the operation failed.[196]

In October 1953, Gavrilă Pop—the only one who was arrested—was included in a larger trial against "American spies," similar to the ones mentioned in 1952 by the *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*. He was accused of "espionage and treason against the Socialist Republic of Romania" and was executed along with the other "spies" on October 31, 1953.[197] The trial was public and it received huge coverage in the Romanian communist media. For days, reporters of the Communist Party newspaper *Scânteia* reported from the courtroom, pointing to the criminal deeds of the "terrorists."[198] Neagu Djuvara emphasizes that during the trial the bandits were also called Legionaries, due to the fact that the Americans had indeed

[194] Author's interview with Neagu Djuvara, June 18, 2013. The dialogue was video recorded by the journalist Monica Tănase with whom I was working for a documentary about the history of the Făgăraş Group. The project was not finalized; material not published. At that time, Neagu Djuvada had not seen Sabin Mare's Securitate files.

[195] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 310459, p. 207, 294. The Securitate documents note 17 August as the birthday of Sabin Mare, wereas his descendants told me that his date of birth was 20 August. If the first account is true, he died on his 33 birthday (if not, three days before).

[196] See Neagu Djuvra, *Amintiri*, pp. 108-109.

[197] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 212009, pp. 2-5. See also Filon Verca, *Paraşutaţi în Romania vândută. Mişcarea de rezistenţă. 1944-1948 [Parachuted Upon the Sold Romania. Resistance Movement, 1944-1948], (*Timişoara: Editura Gordian, 1993).

[198] Such reports can be found in the *Scânteia* newspaper from October 1953. I read consistent accounts on the topic in no. 2789 and 2790.

sent some Legionaries in other operations. However, this was not the case of either of the participants of this operation.[199] With respect to the goal of the "Son of the Motherland," Djuvara reasons that they were meant to be a link between the Romanian armed resistance in the Făgăraș County and the American intelligence:

> We hoped that the parachuted could give a first-hand account on what was happening in the mountains. They had radio-receivers and were supposed to get in contact with us; we also gave them money, maps, revolvers, spyglasses. Now it sounds foolish, but a war between the Americans and Soviets seemed a possibility for some of us and we were trying to be ready.[200]

It is not clear though how the three "spies" were caught. There are no Securitate files available on the topic.[201] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, states in his memoires that it was the work of Kim Philby, the high-ranking member of the British intelligence who worked as a Soviet agent.[202] Djuvara, however, rejects the hypothesis. From his perspective, the operation had flaws from the part of the Americans, who did not take into account Sabin Mare's demands. They used white parachutes and a low altitude helicopter, both easy to be tracked during the night: "They wanted the information, but they did not care enough about these operations. And they knew what we did not know: that no war was going to happen."[203]

The case of Sabin Mare reveals how the links between the anti-communist resistance and the Americans were made in the early 1950s, but also how the two archival systems work together in revealing the history of these espionage actions. However, due to the secrecy of the operations, even when confronting several sources, interruptions in the narrative remain. These informational gaps marked the memory of the events. On the one hand, for Sabin Mare's family it was never clear what happened in the early 1950s: why he left, how he came

[199] Both the Securitate personal files of the three participants and the statements of Neagu Djuvara point to the fact that none of the "spies" had a political affiliation. The term was used only during the trial in 1953 against Gavrilă Pop, who was part of a trial against some Legionaries. See Neagu Djuvara, *Amintiri*, pp. 107-108.
[200] Author's interview with Neagu Djuvara, June 18, 2013.
[201] Last check with the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive on the topic in April 2015.
[202] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki, *Brazii se frâng,* vol. III, p. 253.
[203] Author's interview with Neagu Djuvara, June 18, 2013.

back, when and how he was killed. The first members of the family who saw copies of Mare's political file were his daughter-in-law and his grandson.[204] For the supporters of the Făgăraș Group, on the other hand, "the parachuted" are rather a legend; people remember the love story between the officer who went to school with the King and the daughter of the famous Austrian pastry chef, but none of them seem to know about their link to the armed anti-communist resistance.[205]

Conclusion

A parallel analysis of the two archival system—the Securitate and the RFE files—completes the image of the Romanian armed resistance and points to the connections between reports. A disparate study of the two corpus data would be less relevant; traps and gaps on both sides would be more difficult to trace and solve. The Radio Free Europe archive reveals the apparatus behind the Western discourse, intended as a counter-discourse to the communist propaganda. Both institutions—the political police and the American broadcaster—were using information as a weapon during the Cold War.

Compared to the Securitate chaotic campaign of recruiting as many informers as possible, RFE's informants were introduced into a more or less scientific scheme and were not subject to violence and threats. Although with different methods, both informants and informers were used as tools through which the fight could be carried on. The communist propaganda and the Western counter-propaganda fuelled each other and clashed over time. The next chapter completes the image of armed resistance by bringing in actors neglected by both archival systems discussed in the first two chapters.

[204] During email conversations in 2012, I sent to Valeria and Octavian Mare copies of Sabin Mare's political file.
[205] During oral history interviews conducted between 2011 and 2014 with supporters of the Făgăraș Group and families of the partisans, I asked people if they knew anything about the parachuted who were sent to help the partisans. Most of them said that they know nothing about such operations. Others claimed that it was a rumor invented by those who were still hoping for an American intervention against the Soviets. When mentioning Sabin Mare, all of them recalled the story of Sabin and Eva and the Embacher Sweets Shop. Very few persons, among whom Gheorghe Hașu's wife, knew very little about the action.

CHAPTER THREE
Silenced Actors: Women as Pillars of Support and Keepers of Memory

After critically analyzing the archival systems that reflect the ideological dichotomy of the Cold War, this chapter brings in a category of actors overlooked by both the Securitate files and the Radio Free Europe archive: the supporters of the Făgăraș Group. Even though the propagandistic institutions of the 1950s treat them as marginal characters of the armed anti-communist phenomenon, I argue that they were crucial participants in the movement. Without the supporting network, the group in the mountains could have not resisted more than a few months. In fact, for over five years, hundreds of people from the Făgăraș County provided the partisans with food, cloths, medicines, weapons, shelter, information, and moral support.[206] The partisans needed them in order to survive, whereas the opponents of the regime needed the partisans in order to maintain hope. When taking into account the supporters, the Făgăraș resistance becomes a heterogeneous movement carried by people of different ages, genders, social backgrounds, political and religious affiliations.

This section focuses on one category of supporters, targeted at the same time by the Securitate and the men in the mountains: women. When men fled into the mountains, mothers, wives, and sisters stayed at home and faced the political police's wrath. Although no woman was member of the Făgăraș Group, they became pillars of the supporting network. As long as the fighters in the mountains were active, women in their families were persecuted, discriminated against and stigmatized. Women were the link between those who were fighting and their families and communities. After 1989, the same women became the link between

[206] The two survivors of the Făgăraș Group, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Ion Ilioiu, together with journalist Lucia Baki Nicoară from Făgăraș made a list of the supporters of armed resistance in the region. In 2004, they published a list of over 800 names and short biographies. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki-Nicoară, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. III, pp. 172-225.

generations, keeping the memory of the partisans alive by participating in commemorative events dedicated to those who perished during the political repression of the 1950s. They became the link between private and collective memory.

For the Securitate, women were important enough to be followed and to be pressed to betray their beloved ones, but not sufficient relevant to have a political file. They were "enemies" by proxy; their guilt was that they were faithful to their families, but they were not seen as a political danger. Even though they were arrested, the interrogations are waved into the files of the real "enemies": that is, the men with whom they were connected. They were never asked, as the men always were, about their political opinions. These women were not spoken about during communism and were neglected in post-1989 historiographical works, which portray the partisans only. Media reports, public debates, and movies too focus on men only. If they accidentally mention women, they are included into the stereotypic category of victims, where they lose identity. The purpose here is to give them voice. An analysis of the role and the motivation of women who supported the partisans provides a more rounded view of the movement and completes the black-and-white image of Făgăraș resistance stemming from the Cold War archives.

The questions addressed in this chapter include: Why did women get involved in the movement? How do they describe their role and experiences during the communist repression? What fueled the fight between women and the secret police: did their position against the regime provoke persecution or did the repression motivate women to fight back? Women's perspective on armed resistance will be explored based on oral history interviews and the Securitate documents. Finally, it is worth mentioning that none of these women wrote their memoirs and many of them refused to speak about their experiences to "outsiders,"

fearing that their accounts will be distorted.[207] I mention here only some of their stories and a small part of the experiences they recalled during our meetings.

3.1. Partisans' Relatives and Their Political Labeling

The two survivors of the Făgăraș Group, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Ion Ilioiu, together with the journalist Lucia Baki Nicoară published in 2004 the first list of supporters of the partisans. Without stressing a gender perspective, they name 79 women who were politically persecuted for being active members of the supporting network.[208] They also present eight oral history interviews with women who supported the group and were still alive in 1999.[209] An analysis of this account shows that the group of women who supported the Făgăraș resistance is anything but homogeneous.

The first category of women who supported the Făgăraș Group is that of relatives of the partisans. Their mothers, wives, and sisters were either arrested or followed by the Securitate. However, the majority of women who supported the movement had no family connection to the group members and many never met the fighters before. Most of the supporting women were peasants, but among them were also workers, students, wives of clergymen, and teachers.[210] In terms of ages, they range from early teenagers to third age women. Women mentioned lived in the proximity of the mountains: in the Făgăraș town and in 33 villages in the Făgăraș County. Some came from families who supported the partisans from the beginning. However, some others took the decision of getting involved without telling anyone, and hiding their deeds from parents and husbands. To give an example, in 1951 (one year after the resistance became active), the Securitate was making lists of supporters of the Făgăraș Group. In the village Jibert where none of the partisans had

[207] My personal connection to the Făgăraș Group proved to be an advantage in this case. Women that I interviewed credited me as an insider and were open to discuss their experiences.
[208] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki Nicoara, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. III, pp. 218-276.
[209] Ibid., pp. 31-188.
[210] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, p. 9.

relatives, the Securitate suspected twelve persons who were helping the group from twelve different families. Six of them were women, according to a document titled "List of the Band's Supporters."[211]

Women from the Făgăraș County appear in the black lists of the Securitate as extensions of men, not as individual citizens who had done something wrong.[212] Female relatives of the partisans were treated as limbs of a family led by men: Securitate reports show that if the man of the family was a "bandit," women of his family became targets, regardless of their age, condition, or involvement in the resistance.[213] None of these women were politically active before or during communism and their persecution started when male family members disappeared from home, before the group in the mountains became active per se.[214] They do not have personal files in their names; reports with respect to their situation are included in the men's files and are difficult to trace. The Securitate documents refer to them as "the wife/mother/daughter of the bandit." This status equated to guilt, which in some cases was enough to arrest, interrogate, and condemn them. The approach of the investigators shows that women of the partisans' families were seen as something through which the bandits could be caught. Consequently, the communist apparatus tried to make them "collaborate"; that is, to make them help the regime to catch their male relatives.

In analyzing the experiences of women linked to the Făgăraș anti-communist resistance, one can identify two stages: between 1950 and 1956, when the partisans were active, and between 1957 and 1989, when the movement had been annihilated and communism was still in power. As early as 1950, some women were labeled "enemies of the people" because they were (real or imaginary) relatives, friends, and acquaintances of the

[211] See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 3, p. 228.
[212] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. III, pp. 47-72.
[213] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 40, p. 366 and vol. 37, p. 91.
[214] The information is confirmed by both the women interviewed and by the Securitate files. See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 3-5.

"bandits." Based on the Securitate files, one can argue that it was rather the regime which started the fight against most women in question, before the women had the chance to make any political statement. Regardless of what they did or did not do to support the partisans, they were followed, arrested, interrogated, and beaten in order to say what none of them knew: where the bandits were hiding. Their mere refusal to betray and the help they offered to the partisans was their fight against the regime.

The case of the only two partisans who were married—Gheorghe Hașu and Ioan Pop—shows how men's fate depended on the support of their wives. Their wives were both pregnant when the men fled into the mountains. Eugenia Hașu[215] and Maria Pop,[216] two young peasant women, had to face a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, they were forced by the Securitate to divorce their husbands and return to their parents' home.[217] This was meant to publicly demonstrate that they delimitate themselves from their husbands' deeds. On the other hand, they were followed, arrested, and persecuted as legitimate wives until their former husbands were executed, in 1957. After that and untill the fall of the regime, they were stigmatized and persecuted. Women's experiences included night searches of their homes, interrogations, and house arrest, as Ioan's wife remembers:

> One night in 1954 the Securitate officers came again, but mad with rage. They searched everything in the house and courtyard, and even took off the wooden floor. They didn't find whatever they were looking for, so they started to threaten us with guns asking where Ioan was. Then, they moved in. After they left, my youngest daughter was so frightened that she would only wisper.[218]

[215] Eugenia Hașu is my paternal grandmother. She was born in February 21, 1929 in Ludișor - a village at the bottom of the Făgăraș Mountains, where she still lives. She was 21 years old when her husband fled into the mountains.
[216] Maria Pop was born in August 20, 1919 in the Lisa village. She still lives in the house built with her husband before he entered clandestinity. She was 32 years old when her husband joined the Făgăraș Group.
[217] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal 16, vol. 2, pp. 442, 471-484.
[218] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki Nicoara, *Brazii se frâng,* vol. III, pp. 61-62.

Without being convicted or sent to trial, Maria Pop was detained several times.[219] In 1955 (when she was in her mid 30s and had two young children), she spent six months in a political prison in Codlea town. During interrogations, she was beaten in order to declare were Ioan Pop was hiding, information she did not have, since she managed to meet her husband only once between 1950 and 1956.[220] Maria's father Cornel Șerban spent one year and a half in prison, and her brother Gheorghe Șerban four years.[221] Both men were suspected of hiding information about the resistance. In 2013, when I interviewed her, Maria Pop was 94 years old (see Fig. 11). Looking back at her life during communism, she stated that her husband and his friends did the right thing:

> They did what they had to do. My husband supported his best friend, Gheorghe Hașu, who was already in the mountains. We shared the same beliefs... It was natural to help him. When the Securitate found that out, he had to leave. It was a decision we took together. As for me, I tried to stay alive and raise our daughters. We suffered, but we did what we had to do in order to be in peace with ourselves. We have no guilt in front of God.[222]

[219] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki Nicoară, "Mărturiile soției lui Jan Pop, luptător în Rezistența Anticomunistă din Muntii Făgăraș" [The Testimonies of the wife of Jan Pop, fighter in the Anti-communist Resistance in the Făgăraș Mountains] in *Brazii se frâng,* vol. III, pp. 59-63. Ioan Pop was known as Jan (or Jean) by family and friends, a nick-name used when he was with his familiy in the US.
[220] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. III, p. 62.
[221] Ibidem.
[222] Author's interview with Maria Pop, video recorded on September 4, 2012.

Fig. 11 Maria Pop, the wife of the partisan Ioan Pop.
Photo: Ioana Hașu. (September 2013)

After being forced to divorce, Maria Pop did not remarry. More than 50 years after Ioan Pop was executed, she refers to him as her husband. A similar life story had Eugenia Hașu, the wife of Gheorghe Hașu. One of Eugenia's few meetings with her husband after he fled into the mountains is described by Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, who spoke with both spouses about the moment when Gheorghe Hașu took the risky decision to go see his new-born son and his wife. It was in August 1950, a few months after Gheorghe started his clandestine life:

> It was a Sunday morning. The girl had woken up and, staying on his chest, was closing his eyes with her little hands, bidding him, 'Sleep, daddy, sleep.' She was two years old. Next to them, the mother was breastfeeding the babe. There was so much silence in the house, in the village, perhaps also in the world. (...) The policemen from the Securitate broke down the door. In the house, Ghiță [Gheorghe Hașu] took some clothes with him in a hurry, grasped his haversack and his gun, jumped through a window into the garden of a neighbor, and ran away through the trees. The young wife covered the bed where the husband had slept, closed the window, and hid fast the clothes that remained from him; she was silently praying with the child in her

> arms. Being in a hurry, she forgot the few queen flowers that her husband brought her from the mountains, in a glass at the window. That made the Securitate suspicious. (...) An officer took the child from her arms and threw him, starting to hit her: 'Where did you hide the bandit, bitch?'[223]

Eugenia was 21 years old at that time; she had a two-year old daughter and a few months old son. (see Fig. 12). After the house search, she was arrested together with her teenager brother and her father. She added in another interview that she was beaten and kept away from her children for days: "after that experience, my soul hardened and my body clenched insomuch so that no sorrow and no joy found place in me."[224] The Securitate considered that Eugenia Hașu and Maria Pop supported the anti-communist resistance by not turning in their husbands. To this end, the two women became "enemies of the people." In reality, they knew the least about the partisans and had almost no chance to actually help them. Nevertheless, the label followed them and their children until the fall of the regime. That meant that they were given the lowest jobs available and their children were refused the right to complete their studies because of their "unhealthy origin."[225]

[223] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng ,* vol. I, pp. 117-118.
[224] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki Nicoară, *Brazii se frâng,* vol IV, p. 50.
[225] For instance, in the mid 1960s, Eugenia Hașu became the first woman who had the job of a mailman in the Brașov County. It was a work usually refused by women because it required long walks on often harsh weather between the villages at the bottom of the Făgăraș Mountains. She accepted the job after some years during which she had to work as housekeeper in another town, since she was rejected by everybody in the Făgăraș region. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng,* vol. III, pp. 49-51.

Fig. 12. Eugenia and Gheorghe Hașu at their wedding (February 2, 1947).
In 1950, before leaving into the mountains, the partisan wrapped some family photographs—among which this one—and hid them into the attic of his house. Hașu was probably trying to save the documents from the Securitate house searches. In 2012, the partisan's son found the photographs by accident and saw his parents together for the first time. All other family photographs were lost, confiscated, or destroyed during the communist repression.
Courtesy of the Hașu family.

The Securitate believed that family members of the partisans, especially their mothers, knew where they were and what their plans were. Accordingly, the secret police invested impressive resources to make their closest relatives—usually women—reveal the hiding places. Since violence yielded no results (for women did not talk, regardless of the methods used), the political police created a parallel reality by having the mothers in particular

followed by undercover political officers who played different roles. The informers were meant to befriend the women and then obtain information. For example, Ana Gavrilă, the mother of Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu was one of the most targeted. Since her son was the only partisan from the Făgăraș Group who escaped the Securitate, the woman was followed from 1949 until 1976. Many notes written by informers who tried to gain her confidence reveal a pseudo-reality that Ana experienced without knowing. For several years, for instance, she confessed to priests who were informants or Securitate officers undercover.[226] In a note from 1975, such a "priest" was reporting to his superiors:

> On June 5th 1957 I visited again Ana Gavrilă and had a service at her house. I listed her son Ion among the living on *the prayer list*.[227] I asked her if it was right to pray for him as being alive or maybe he is dead. She said that it was right to list him among the living, but that only God knows everything.[228]

In the same file, there are tens of notes like this in the Securitate archive signed with the same code name: "Informant Timaru Gică." Despite his efforts, the informer could not obtain more information than in the note above. Hence, after some years the Securitate decided to send to Ana Gavrilă "pastors" from different denominations who had "accidentally" heard about her sorrow and offered to pray for the return of her son. Securitate reports note that the woman chased them away, just as she did when some palm-readers and fortune-tellers sent by the political police to visit her.[229] At times, when Ana was sick or beaten after interrogations, the political police made sure that the doctors who took care of her were also informants.[230] At the beginning of the 1970s, another plan was developed: an alleged "nun" Tatiana entered Ana Gavrilă's life and managed to gain her trust. For several

[226] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal I 770. vol. 112, p. 53.
[227] She refers to a tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church according to which a priest individually names the people he is praying for. There are separate services for the living and for the dead persons.
[228] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal I 770, vol. 117, p. 4.
[229] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, pag. 392
[230] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Penal I 770, vol. 110, p. 123.

years, she cultivated an interested friendship with Ion's mother, while transcribing for the Securitate every conversation they had. Here is a note from 1975:

> The old woman told me: 'Dearest sister, I can open my heart and my soul to you. I can see that you are a believer and you taught me how to pray for my son. I miss him so, but I know that if he came, the communists would take him away from me. Maybe it is better as it is. May the Lord keep him and guard him wherever he is.' After this, I told Ana Gavrilă that I won't pray for the return of her son anymore and we sang religious songs.[231]

According to her own statements given after 1990, Ana Gavrilă did not know the whereabouts of her son.[232] For over 25 years—since Ion left in 1950 and until he was arrested in 1976—Ana saw her son a few times, only during the first years of resistance. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the Securitate sent to her false sons, just to test her reaction. When Ion finally took the risk and showed up at his mother's door, some 20 years after their last encounter, Ana did not recognize her son and refused to let him in until he showed her some birth signs on his body.[233] During those years, Ana had to face not only the regime's violence against her, but also everyday traps set by the Securitate. Tired of all people who out of the blue entered her life and offered to comfort her, the women began to recognize the informants and mocked them. A report issued in 1970 by two high ranked Securitate generals noted that the informants in the Făgăraș County are not well trained: "When the mother of the fugitive was asked by our collaborator where Ion was, she replied that he is in England, where he married the daughter of the Marshal of Queen's Palace."[234] The author of the report ordered the dismissal of such unprofessional informants and the recruitment of new ones. A note from April 1965, shown that the sister of the "bandit" mocked the "agent L.I." who reported: "When I asked Leana Gavrilă what news she had about her brother, the sister of the "bandit"

[231] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 107, p. 217.
[232] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol II, pp. 100-101.
[233] The encounter is presented by Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu in his memoires. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. II, pp. 187-190.
[234] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, p. 402.

replied to me: *I think that Ion met Gheorghiu Dej and Kennedy and they are now putting the world back on track. Satisfied?*"[235] The reports show that women either gained experience in indentifying the Securitate snitches or they just closed themselves to the world and became defensive, suspecting that whoever approached them had a hidden purpose.

Besides wives and mothers, teenage sisters of the men in the mountains were also taken into custody for supporting their brothers. *Supporting* usually meant *not turning them in*, but there were cases when some women managed to send their brothers food, clothes, notes, medicines. Eugenia Gavrila[236] was 13 years old when some Securitate officers tried to make her speak about her brother, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, the leader of the group in the mountains:

> My brother Ion was in the mountains and my parents were in prison. I was alone with my sister, taking care of our household. We were two kids at their mercy. The Securitate men came from time to time and searched everything. I was 13 when they first took me. They hit me, asked questions that I did not answer, and then gave me electric shocks. I didn't know where my brother was hiding, but I had a secret place where I left food for them. I was sneaking out during the night, when no one could see me. He used to leave me notes there. I did not say anything. Not then and not ever. They could beat me, but they had no power over my heart.[237]

As a young girl, Eugenia Gavrilă continued to help the group led by her brother with food, shelter, and information about the Securitate actions (see Fig. 13). She claims that the experiences she went through had turned her against the regime:

> At the beginning I was too young to have political opinions, but they were violent to us since I was a child. How could I ever be on their side? My brother was not a criminal, he fought for justice. How could I help them kill him, as they did with the others? The communists tried to break us, but we became stronger. They pulled us down, but we managed to stand up every time. They did not defeat us. We did our best in what life put us through.[238]

[235] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 110, p. 234.
[236] Eugenia Gavrilă, born March 18, 1937 lives in the Recea village, near Făgăraş.
[237] Author's interview with Eugenia Gavrilă, recorded on September 4, 2012.
[238] Idem.

Fig. 13. Eugenia Gavrilă, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu's sister. (2013)
Photo: Ioana Hașu.

Fig. 14. Victoria Hașu with her husband Mihai Trambitas and one of their five children. (1952)
Courtesy of the Hașu family.

Another woman who risked her life to help her brothers who were in the mountains is Victoria Hașu (see Fig. 14).[239] She was the only female relative of the partisans who managed to constantly keep in touch with the fugitives from 1950 until 1956, when the Securitate arrested the last members of the Făgăraș Group. She was the link between the partisans and their families. Aware of the fact that she was followed, she tried to find tricks to confuse the

[239] Victoria Hașu (September 11, 1919 – February 14, 2008) was living with her parents when her brothers Gheorghe and Andrei Hașu went into the mountains. She stood on their side from the beginning and offered her unconditional support until the last partisan was executed.

Securitate informants. She was one of the women interviewed for *Memorialul Durerii [The Memorial of Suffering]*—a documentary of the Romanian Public Television about the persecution, the labor camp system, and the anti-communist resistance in Romania. Victoria Hașu talked about how she tried to confuse the communist surveillance:

> I went to Ileni village, but I was so nervous... I went straight to Victor's mother [Victor Metea was one of the partisans in the mountains] and I gave her the message. My brother [she refers to Gheorghe Hașu] asked me to tell her to go in the place they knew and meet her son. She told me: "Before leaving, just go to our neighbors and ask them if they need help with their harvest work, so that it won't look suspicious that you came to see me." It was harvest time. I did that, but people refused me. After that, I went into some bushes and changed my clothes: another blouse, a different skirt, another scarf. I had everything with me. I was thinking that in this way the one who was probably following me would lose my trace. I knew that if they suspected anything they would take me again and beat me. Then I left the village in a hurry.[240]

Victoria Hașu was right to think that she had a shadow. Securitate officers dealing with the Făgăraș Group ordered that she should be followed "step by step."[241] Even so, she always managed to trick her "escort." After the partisans were caught, the Securitate realized that she was one of the main supporters of the group, hence she continued to be spied on.[242] Victoria was married, but she never told her husband that she was in contact with the partisans. She explained later to family members that she was afraid of leaks during routine arrests, when they were questioned and beaten. "What one does not know, one cannot say," she claimed.[243] It was common, however, for family members to never talk about their

[240] *Memorialul Durerii [The Memorial of Suffering]*, episode 6, from 15.51 to 17.00 min. Accessed online, on the 22nd of March 2015: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OY2MzWj7ohs.
[241] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 11, p. 18.
[242] In August 1958, when Ogoranu was the only partisan from the Făgăraș Group still free, high-rank Securitate officers ordered the recruitment of Victoria Trâmbițaș (name she took after her husband). A report issued on this occasion stated that "she is an intelligent and capable woman, she has the power of persuasion and is authoritative (...) all members of the band trusted her and held her family in high respect." Later reports show that she could not be "recruited," for she refused to collaborate. See CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 691474, vol. 1, pp. 4-9.
[243] I had several dialogs with Victoria Hașu between 2004 and 2007 with respect to her experiences during communism and her role in the supporting network of the Făgăraș Group. One of the statement repeated by her during our interviews was: *"I would have entered fire for my brothers. There is no torture in the world that could make me betray them and side with the criminals."*

relatives on the Securitate black list. One of the reasons was that most of them had microphones installed in their homes. They got used to the wires which were not very well hidden and learned to keep their thoughts to themselves.[244] The transcripts of everyday conversations were archived in the Securitate files.[245]

The mothers and sisters of all partisans had more or less the same fate. At the cost of constant arrests which led to "regular beating"—as they used to call the "treatment" that usually accompanied interrogations—the Securitate documents show that none of them collaborated.[246] Perhaps that was their main support for the group and their contribution to the anti-communist resistance. None of the women was executed, a punishment reserved for the "real" enemies of the state.

3.2. Women of the Supporting Network

Besides female relatives who stood on their side, the partisans were helped by women and young girls with different motivations. According to Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu the statement of Presbytera Valeria Raita is representative of the women who supported the partisans. She was Ion Gavrila's teacher in primary school. In 1955 she was arrested and asked to sign a collaboration form. The Securitate lieutenant Francisc Gergely reported:

> Seeing Ion Gavrila's photograph, she reasoned that he is an individual with high human qualities. She referred to his capacity and behavior in school, but also to the meetings she had with him since he became a fugitive. She asked me: *What will happen if you catch him? Will you kill him?* Then she stated: *I have known Ion Gavrilă since he was a pupil and I really appreciated him. I met him in 1951 when he was a partisan and I helped him. I do not know where he was going. Once I made a mistake and I asked him that. He smiled and said: 'Why are you asking what I cannot tell?' I care about him as I care about my*

[244] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, pp. 379-380, 401.
[245] Most of the transcripts can be found in the Dosar Informativ 770, CNSAS Archive.
[246] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 48.

own children and my heart is in pain knowing his situation. I declare that if I met him again, my heart would not let me betray him.[247]

Fig. 15. Maria Cornea. Not dated.Photograph published by Ion GavrilăOgoranu in his memoirs.

Women of different ages and social status had similar motivations. In some cases, they knew the men in the mountains or their families and reasoned that what the partisans were doing was for the good of the people. According to their own statements during Securitate interrogations, women witnessed the abuses of the Securitate, night searches, random arrests, property confiscations etc.[248] Hence, some declared that the ongoing injustice convinced them to help those who were fighting.[249] For many, helping the partisans was a way of keeping hope alive. As long as the partisans were out there, people who opposed the regime thought that there was still hope for a different future than what they were experiencing at the time. Maria Cornea, a young and educated girl living with her mother, offered them food and shelter for years (see Fig. 15). After 1990, she explained:

> I remember the 23rd of August 1950 when our village was to adopt collectivization. Like always, they were convincing us with their guns. (...) I knew some of the partisans; two of them were from my village. Even though I have never been involved in politics, I helped them because I was sure that they were fighting for the good of our country.[250]

In 1952, Maria Cornea was arrested by mistake. The Securitate thought that she was the cousin of a partisan. After six weeks of interrogation in Brasov, the officers realized they

[247] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 40, p. 366.
[248] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 37, p. 91.
[249] CNSAS Archive, Dosar Informativ 770, vol. 20-25. See also Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. III, pp. 30-80.
[250] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. III, pp. 144-145.

had the wrong woman. However, she was tried and sentenced for four years in prison, for they were suspecting that she had some contacts with the men in the mountains.[251]

Different women from the Făgăraș County helped the partisans occasionally, when some of them looked for shelter or asked for food. Sometimes there was a tacit pact between men who knocked on some doors asking for help and women who opened them: men did not say who they were, women never asked.[252] It is probably safe to assume, however, that women could guess that the exhausted men in worn out clothes sneaking in at night were hunted for by the Securitate. In Calbor village, for instance, at the beginning of 1950s men used to spend the nights in the woods, just to make sure that the Securitate won't find them in the event of some unexpected searches. When Securitate observers were set on the top of the surrounding hills, men decided not to return home. For months, they met their mothers and wives secretly. During the summer, when women were facing alone the house chores, men tried to help them without being seen, as Ștefan Cîlția remembers. He was back then one of the young boys of the village; he is now a painter involved in projects related to researching the crimes of communism:

> Men who were hiding asked their women to send them skirts, scarves, and working tools. They would dress up as women at dawn and appear on the lands near the village, helping their mothers, wives, and sisters with the hoeing. The Securitate officers who were silently watching the village from the peaks of the hills never found out the trick.[253]

Finally, there was a particular group of women who were neither relatives of the partisans nor supported resistance, but they were nevertheless persecuted for helping the "bandits." The alleged anti-communist attitude of these women was a fictional product of the

[251] Idem, pp. 142-1149.
[252] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, vol. I, p. 229.
[253] Ștefan Cîlția, excerpt form a presentation during the *Sâmbăta Summer School* organized by the Institute for the Investigation of the Crimes of Communism, July 14, 2014. The story was presented also in a media interview produced by Adevarul Live: http://adevarul.ro/cultura/istorie/satul-romanesc-moarte-clinica-pictorul-Stefan-caltia-despre-colectivizare-la-colholz-fost-data-fericit-furat--8_541163bd0d133766a80a0a9e/index.html From 16.00 min to 18.30 min. [Last accessed: March 23, 2015].

Securitate files, which sometimes were *creating* biographies that would fit the "enemies of the people." For instance, Violeta Hașu, the daughter of the "bandit" Gheorghe Hașu could not live her childhood as an ordinary child, for she was *made* "offspring of the bandit."[254] The label was typed in 1952 under a photograph with Violeta and her brother Ioan Hașu, archived in their father's file (see Fig. 16).

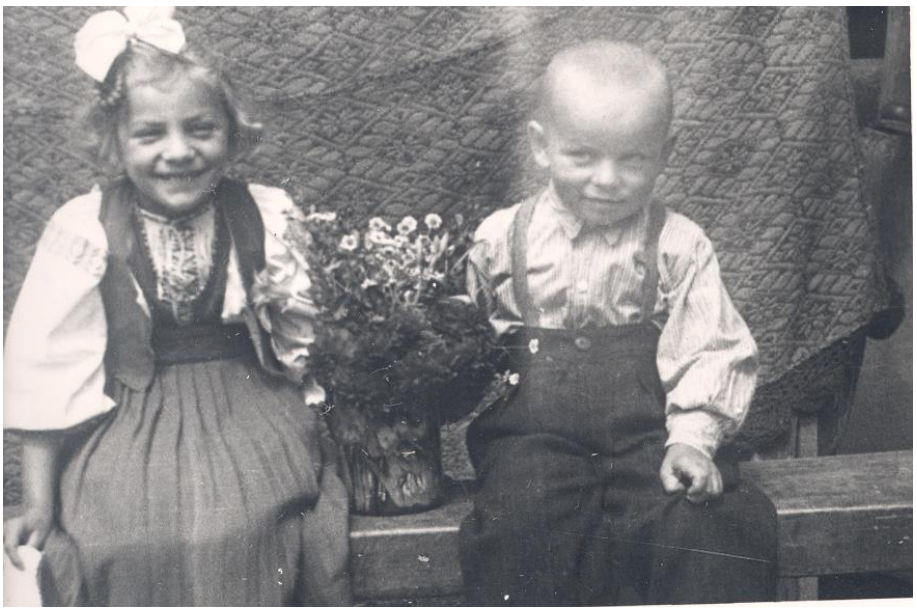


Fig. 16. Violeta and Ioan Hașu, the children of the partisan Gheorghe Hașu. It is the only photograph with the two of them as children, taken in 1952, when their father was in the mountains. They saw it for the first time in 2012. It was taken by a Securitate informant who was paid to spy on the family and give information to the Securitate. He was a neighbour of Gheorghe Hașu's wife and the children were familiar to him. Nobody in the family realized at the time that the person was spying on. CNSAS Archive.

Violeta was two years old when her father went into hiding and Ioan was born some months after Gheorghe Hașu had become a partisan. Even though they were too young to have a personal file and a biography, their real identity was later drawn in the light of this label that followed them like a shadow throughout their lives. Fifteen years after his father was executed, Violeta's application for college was rejected because of her "unhealthy origin." In order to complete her studies, she was given up for adoption to a relative from a different town, only to change her name and lose the ghost identity attached to her former family name.

[254] The photograph was published in Ogoranu's memoirs. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng,* vol I, p. 116.

She was traced down, so she moved to another town for the second time in order to complete her studies. As an adult, she became a Communist Party member for convenience, but she never sympathized with the regime who executed her father and stigmatized her for his political activity.[255]

Conclusions

Women who supported the Făgăraș Group had a crucial role in the history of the armed resistance. They were the invisible link between the partisans and the supporting network. If women had fallen—by betraying or stopping to help them—men would have been caught. Looking at the Securitate approach towards women, the gender stereotypes of the regime is obvious: women were not seen as having the potential of being politically active. Even though they were followed, arrested, beaten, stigmatized, they did not have political files on their own names. The Securitate saw them as extensions of their men, maybe their weak points, and they were used as tools through which men could be arrested. Women's narratives complete the image of the political repression during communism and speak about the working practices of the Securitate, but also about the mentalities of the time.

The fight of the regime against women who supported the Făgăraș Group continued after 1957, but in a different form. Women were marginalized and their previous political label followed them. They continued their resistance in the same way they did during the 1950s: by sticking to their families and to their values, without being politically active. Although they were not given voice within historiographical accounts or public debates, after 1990 women stood up once again on the side of resistance. Victoria Hașu—the sister of the partisans Gheorghe and Andrei Hașu—was the first survivor of the Făgăraș Group to ask the

[255] The information about Ioan and Violeta Hașu were obtained during several dialogs with the two of them, between 2000 and 2014. Neither of them had a personal Securitate file. The Securitate reports related to them are included in their father's file.

Ministry of Justice to open the Securitate files in Romania. In 2006, Ana Gavrilă, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu's wife, sent an open letter to the Ministry of Justice denouncing the fact that women who suffered during communism were not given the rights all politically persecuted citizens had.[256]

Women of the Făgăraș resistance do not consider themselves either victims or heroes. Victims usually portray themselves as helpless and defeated, a statement which cannot be found, to the best of my knowledge, in any of their public positions; nor do they see themselves as heroes, arguing that their acts do not fall into the category of heroic deeds. Women interviewed with respect to their involvement in the Făgăraș movement see themselves as ordinary people who did not make compromises for the sake of an easy life. Despite the fact that they were subject to violence, they talk about forgiveness and reconciliation, in a still tormented post-communist society. In their view, they did not fight *against* an ideology, but *for* their life values, among which one can find religious liberty, respect of property, or the unity of family, as they understood them. Women's narrative about their roles and motivations within the resistance movement, opens a rounded view of the Făgăraș resistance and disclose the complexity of the phenomenon beyond the ideological views proposed by those who overlooked them.

[256] In private interviews, I discussed with Victoria Hașu about her inquiry at the Ministry of Justice. The letter sent by Ana Gavrilă to the same Ministry was published by media and also by her husband in his memoirs. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, v ol. II, pp. 303-309.

CHAPTER FOUR
(Post)Memory: Balance Between Antagonistic Discourses

The focus of this section is the *memory* of the Făgăraș Group.[257] After discussing the history of the movement mirrored by two antagonistic archival systems and completing the image with narratives of actors overlooked by both corpus data, this chapter looks at the self-image of the survivors and their families. The sources of this section are written memoirs and oral testimonies. This chapter explores also the memories of descendants, for dealing with traumatic memories is a challenge not only for survivors of the Făgăraș Group, but also for their offspring, who were born as targets of the state surveillance. They bear the "postmemory" of the political repression, as Marianne Hirsch called the process through which information about traumatic events is passed along from previous generations to the next ones.[258] From the *autobiographical memory* of survivors and the *postmemory* of their descendants, a new interpretation of the Făgăraș Group's history stems out.[259] This new narrative clashes and intertwines with the discourses analyzed in the previous chapters.

Like in the case of the other systems of sources discussed, this analysis looks not only at what people remember, but also at how memories were constructed, "archived," and integrated in the personal past. The questions to be addressed include: How did survivors of the Făgăraș resistance and their descendants see the fight against the regime fifty years after it ended? What are the gaps and silences of their recollections? What is the process of recalling traumatic experiences?

[257] I use the term *memory* in the frame of Maurice Halbwachs' work as, as "a reconstruction of the past using data taken from the present." Lewis A. Coser (ed. and trans.), Introduction to *On Collective Memory*, Maurice Halbwachs (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) p. 34.
[258] See Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, p 103.
[259] The term *autobiographical memory* is understood here as defined by Maurice Halbwachs who speaks about the "memory of events that we have personally experienced in the past." See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memmory*, pp. 23-24.

Besides written memoirs, the source of this chapter consists of oral history longitudinal interviews conducted with survivors of the Făgăraș group and their families.[260] Their recollection of the past was a dynamic and conversational process through which informants recalled past events from the standpoint of the present and in the frame of a certain political and social context of their life.[261] The interviews used in this chapter took place between 2011 and 2014 and the dialogues particularly focused on the topic of trauma and its aftermath.[262] I returned at least twice to each family and met at least two generations of the same group. The average duration of one interview was 2.5 hours. All encounters took place in the framework of a personal relationship that was built in time as a result of our close discussions. I witnessed different stages of the healing process within these families, as they uncovered and admitted their suffering. In order to explore the *postmemory* of resistance, I had meetings and email discussions with the third generation of some families, namely the grandchildren of the partisans. As in any oral history project, my presence, age, gender, background, my questions, and other factors might have influenced our dialogue.[263]

[260] For methodological issues related to longitudinal interviews, see Lisa M. Diamond, "Careful What You Ask For: Reconsidering Feminist Epistemology and Autobiographical Narrative in Research on Sexual Identity Development" in *Signs* 31(2) pp. 471-491.

[261] Roland J. Grele discusses the process through which an interviewee *creates* his own past by recalling, wording, and narrating specific events to an audience. The past is defined through a "fluid and interactive" process: on the one hand, is a self-conversational process (the person defines himself while giving meaning to his memories); on the other hand, it is a "conversational narrative," a relationship with the interviewer (who takes an active role in the narration: by being present, by asking questions, and by transmitting non-verbal messages). See Roland J. Grele "Movement without an Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems of Oral History" in Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (eds), *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 38-53. The issue of the intersection between social and personal memories is addressed are Maurice Halbwachs, *On collective memory*, pp. 43-44.

[262] The history of my interviews with people involved in the Făgăraș resistance started back in 2000, when I first met the two survivors of the group that fought in the Făgăraș Mountains: Ion Gavarilă Ogoranu and Ion Ilioiu. At the time of our first informal meetings and for some years after, I did not conduct systematic research. Hence, I did not record all of our discussions, but I took notes after some dialogues. My first actual interviews related to this subject were taken after 2002, when I met on different occasion relatives of the partisans and people who supported them.

[263] I explained my personal connection to the topic in the Introduction, note 15. For ethical issues related to the interpretation of longitudinal interviews, see Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce, Barabara Laslett. *Telling Stories: the Use of Personal Narrative in the Social Sciences and History*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (2008), pp. 1-14 and 98-125 and Edna Lomsky-Feder, "Life Stories, War, and Veterans: On the Social Distribution of Memories" in *Ethos* 32 (1): 82-109.

There are three sections to this chapter. In the first part, I will present the written memoirs of Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu. Despite the fact that the author talked about the experiences of the other people involved in resistance, his image became normative and shaped the memory of the whole group. The second section is dedicated to the *postmemory* of two families who participated in the Făgăraș resistance, focusing on the process of recalling trauma.[264] Last subchapter explores how the image of the Făgăraș Group was reflected in the post 1989 public sphere and what are main the controversies on the topic.

4.1 Partisans' written messages and Ogoranu's memoirs

In order to erase the traces of resistance from society, the communist apparatus punished any allusion to the anti-communist fight. The opponents of the regime were demonized in the state-controlled media, and mentioning their names was forbidden within the heavily surveyed public space. Photographs and identification papers of the partisans were confiscated by the political police during house searches in the early 1950s. The documents were considered "evidence," and were archived in the political police files.

Each person who was interrogated with respect to the anticommunist resistance was compelled to sign a declaration saying that he or she would never talk about the subject matter. The outcome of the communist repression was a silent trauma, shared by hundreds of families in the Făgăraș region.[265] It can be considered a collective wound, never revealed, never taken care of, and never healed. Although communal, the trauma was lived in solitude

[264] For the second section of this chapter I used a final paper written during the fall term 2014 for the course *HIST 5071 - Realism after Socialism: Art, Politics, and Communication in the Soviet Sphere, 1945-Today*. I benefited a lot from the comments and guidance of Professor Angelina Lucento, who encouraged me to explore the role of photographs in recalling trauma related to the Făgăraș resistance and gave me consistent feedback on my research.

[265] According to the Securitate files, around one thousand families were followed and persecuted in a way or another during the time when the Făgăraș Group was active. The role and implication of the supporters was disscused in the third chapter of this thesis. For the list of names and short biographies, see Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Lucia Baki Nicoară, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. III, pp. 172-225.

by every person, since the topic could not be discussed or shared even within the families. Only by unveiling and understanding this trauma one can understand the silence of the survivors and sometimes their refusal to talk about their experiences. The suffering explains why—with one exception—people did not testify about their life during the communist political repression. There are few messages from the 1950s and one single series of written memoirs authored by Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu. It is worth mentioning that his experience is to some extent different of the others, since he is the only partisan who was not imprisoned.[266]

During the time when the Făgăraș Group was active, the partisans wrote various messages with the aim of explaining their fight and deeds. Some of the notes got lost in the mountains, whereas others were found and archived by the Securitate in the political files.[267] The most consistent document from that time is the "Testament of the Făgăraș Carpathian Group" written in 1954 by the last six members of the movement.[268] Even though the message was conceived by only half of them, some sort of cultic memory was formed around it. Stressing their patriotism, the partisans presented their fight as a self-sacrifice for the good of the country dedicated to the next generations:

> We want to bring on the altar of the motherland all that is good in our weak earthly being: our freedom, our youth, our renounciations of a

[266] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu spent, however, six months in arrest in 1976, immediately after he was caught, after 21 years of hiding alone, after the Făgăraș Group was annihilated. The Securitate files related to this period were not available last time when I checked with the CNSAS (April 2015). They are either classified or they were destroyed. According to his on testimony, he was not subjected to violence during the interrogations. It was one year after Romania had signed the Helsinki Final Act and the regime used the situation in its favor saying that a dangerous opponent is set free after being arrested. The period of interrogation is presented by Ogoranu. According to him, during interrogation high-rank Securitate officials asked him why the American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had enquired about him. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol II, pp. 220-241.

[267] For some notes left by the partisans at sheepfolds in the mountains and handed to the Securitate, see images at the end of the first chapter. The documents were archived at CNSAS, in Dosar Penal 16, vol. 1, pp. 37-38 and 224-232; vol. 7, p. 32, 64, 226, 227, 282, 303. Another document connected to the Făgăraș Group is the diary of Vasile Motrescu, a partisan from the Bucovina region who was used by the Securitate in a mission aimed at catching the men in the Făgăraș Mountains. Motrescu accepted the deal, but then warned the partisans. After that, he spend some time alone in the Făgăraș Mountains keeping a diary, which was eventually found by the Securitate. See Liviu Țăranu and Theodor Bărbulescu (eds.) *Jurnale din rezistența anticomunistă.*

[268] The testament was published by Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu in a volume consisting of excerpts from the Securitate files. See *Brazii se frâng*, vol IV, pp. 411-413.

> comfortable life. And if the votive candle that we lit will require our lives in order to shine, we shall not hesitate to sacrifice them.[269]

After the fall of the regime, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu was the first to write about the history of the Făgăraș Group at a time when the topic of armed anti-communist resistance was barely known.[270] He published his first memoirs in 1995, when the Securitate files were still closed and the so-called resistance in the mountains did not seem of much interest to researchers.[271] Aware of the value of his work, the former partisan stated in his volume that "every event recalled is a historical account."[272] He titled his work *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc* [*Pine Trees Break, But They Do Not Bend*] comparing the fighters with the strong trees that cover the Făgăraș Mountains. As he explained in various interviews, *they not bend* is an allusion to the moral rectitude of the partisans, who did not bow and make compromises. In his books, he presented in detail, year by year, the formation of the resistance, the events of the years spent in the mountains, his long period of solitary clandestinity and depicts how his life continued until he participated in the Revolution of December 1989.

Dedicating his book to all people from the Făgăraș County who opposed communism, Ogoranu highlighted the motivation of the armed anti-communist fight. According to him, the character of the fight was threefold: national, Christian, and monarchist.[273] Ogoranu also stressed the religious convictions of the partisans and their families, some members of Eastern Orthodox Church, others of the opressed Greek-Catholic demomination.[274] With respect to the fight, he recalled several situations—confirmed by the Securitate documents—proving the partisans avoided to open fire against troops sent after them. Both his memoirs and Securitate

[269] See Ibid. p. 412.
[270] See Introduction, note 23.
[271] Historian Lucian Boia stated in 1997 that Romanian historians were not interested at the time in researching the communist past and that most important contributions with respect to the topic came from memoirs and non-professionals. See Lucian Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească* [*History and Myth in the Romanian Consciousness*], (București: Humanitas, 1997), pp. 9-10.
[272] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol I, p. 15.
[273] Cited by Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența din Muntii Fagars," p. 495.
[274] Ogoranu stressed in his work the oppression against the Greek-Catholic Church, outlawed by the communist rule in 1948. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frag*, vol I, pp. 95-96.

documents confirm that sometimes the soldiers were not very eager to open fire at the partisans either. According to Ogoranu, in the first years of resistance the partisans left notes for the soldiers proposing a truce.[275] It seemed to have functioned, since there were no casualties on either sides until the regime decided to send the Army in the mountains (after 1951). Prefacing the first volume of his memoirs, Ogoranu also tackled the controversial issue of the political affiliation of the partisans. He wrote about "the color of the eyes" of partisans, probably hinting at their political color:

> Some did not like the color of the eyes of the people who fought in the mountains. I will answer to them that the Romanian mountains had been in the same places where they are still being today, equally, for all youth of the country. If only some Romanian young people stood up with arms in their hands and entered the thicket of those mountains, history must take them into account as they were: good or bad.[276]

In the *Foreword* to his first volume, Ogoranu wrote about the motivation for publishing his books: "I wrote these pages in the memory of those who fought and died."[277] Another goal was "to testify that this corner of the country did not willingly bend its head to Communism."[278] From Ogoranu's perspective, the books were meant as well as a response over years to the communist propaganda, which presented the partisans as "wicked murderers, looking for their own good, and capable of any infamy."[279] Even though his memoirs brought to life hundreds of people active during the Făgăraș resistance, media discourses and public debates focussed only on his profile, overlooking the other actors. He even received criticism for having too many "characters" in his work. He responded to this in one of his volumes saying that "they are not characters, dear readers, but real people, who lived their lives, who sacrificed a lot, and who do not have in this world more than the few lines dedicated to them

[275] See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. I, pp. 277-278.
[276] Ibid., p. 16.
[277] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. I, p. 15.
[278] Idem.
[279] Idem.

in this volume"[280] Finally, the former partisan admitted that he never thought that he will live to see the fall of Communism: "I knew that the day of truth will come, but I never believed that I will be alive to witness it."[281]

After 2000, when the political archive became available for researchers, Ogoranu complemented his own narration by publishing a volume consisting of excerpts from the Securitate files. On this occasion, he discussed again the purpose of his work saying that:

> I did this to prove that the three volumes of memoirs previously published were not just some stories, but the cruel reality lived by the author and all people mentioned there; I testify for the purity of our ideals, our dedication (...) and our sacrifices; I put everything in front of historians and invite them to judge, weight, and decide if there was or not an armed anti-communist resistance in Romania.[282]

Another volume co-authored by Ogoranu and journalist Lucia Baki Nicoară presents a series of oral history interviews with supporters and survivors of the Făgăraș Group. They offer short accounts of their suffering during the political repression. Nonetheless, the subjectivity of Ogoranu's work should be taken into account when using the books: the memoirs are his own recollection on the topic and the excerpts are a personal selection from a vast amount of files. However, they bring a valuable insight into the armed anti-communist phenomenon.

An active researcher of the Romanian opposition to communism, Ogoranu published some other books related to the armed anti-communist movements around Romania and also works aimed at revealing the universe of the Romanian village before Communism.[283] As a

[280] Idem.
[281] Ibid., p. 441.
[282] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. IV, p. 10.
[283] For other books of memoirs, see Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Întâmplări din lumea lui Dumnezeu* [*Stories from God's World*] (Satu Mare: Editura M.C., 1999) and Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Amintiri din copilărie* [*Memoirs from Childhood*], (Timișoara: Editura Marineasa, 2000). Historical works related to other groups of anti-communist resistance: Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng dar nu se îndoiesc*, vol. VI - *Episcopul Ioan Suciu in fata furtunii* [*Archbishop Ioan Suciu facing the storm*], (Cluj: Editura Viața Creștină, 2006) and Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, Elis Neagoe-Pleșa, Liviu Pleșa, *Brazii se frâng dar nu se îndoiesc vol. VII - Rezistența anticomunistă din Munții Apuseni* [*Anti-Communist Resistance in the Apuseni Mountains*], (Baia Mare: Editura Marist, 2007). The latter is co-authored by Ogoranu together with researchers from the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive. Finally, two years after his death, his last work was published, a novel partly written during the years in

member of the Negru Vodă Foundation, he organized in 2002 in Făgăraș the first exhibition of photographs and documents dedicated to the Făgăraș Group.[284] He participated in the production of a number of TV documentaries related to the armed resistance, as part of the popular series called *Memorialul Durerii* [*The Memorial of Suffering*].[285] He also recorded a series of oral interviews with family members of the partisans with the Romanian director Nicolae Margineanu.[286] Ogoranu spent most of the 43 years of communism in clandestinity, with the Securitate on his footsteps, hiding alone or keeping a low profile. After 1989 and until 2006 when he died, he became a public figure, an active writer and researcher of the recent past, participating in public debates, conferences, media talk-shows, projects in the domain of public history, meetings with students, and commemorations. His main message was that the "the history of anti-communist resistance should be written, consulting all sources."[287] While still alive, he dismissed both images stating on the one hand that the partisans were not criminals and on the other hand that they cannot be considered models:

> When we did what we did, there were other historical, political and social circumstances. (...) If someone would ask me what I want to represent for others, I would say that I want to be an impulse to sincerity, courage, clarity; I want to be an impulse for the courage to judge and to be wrong, but everything done with honesty and courage. We cannot be models, but only impulses. The new models shall be created by those who act now.[288]

the mountains and finished by Ogoranu's grandaughter: Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and Anamaria Ciur, *Iuda* [*Judas*], (Baia Mare: Editura Marist, 2008).

[284] Fundația Culturală Negru Vodă [Negru Vodă Cultural Foundation] is among the first NGOs in Făgăraș set up after the collapse of the communist regime. It is chaired by the History teacher Florentin Olteanu and its main projects are dedicated to the history of the Făgăraș County. The NGO is one of the partners of the National Institute for the Study of the Crimes of Communism in Romania.

[285] The *Memorial of Suffering* is a documentary series produced by the Romanian Television on the topic of political persecution during communism. It started in 1991 and a new series begun in 2008. The main producer is Lucia Hossu-Longin. See webpage: http://www.tvrplus.ro/emisiune-memorialul-durerii-o-istorie-care-nu-se-invata-la-scoala-134. [Last accessed May 22, 2015].

[286] Nicolae Mărgineanu intented to produce a documentary about the history of the Făgăraș Group, but the project was never finalized. In 2013 he offered me a copy of the footages consisting of 358 minutes (around 9 hours) of dialogues between Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and family members of the other partisans.

[287] The idea was stated on numerous occasions and is stressed in his books. See Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. I, pp. 15-16. See also Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența din Munții Făgăraș," pp.495-497.

[288] Cited by Dorin Dobrincu in "Rezistența armată anticomunistă," *Anuar*, p. 499.

Just like most of the supporters, the former partisan refuted not only heroization and demonization of the movement, but also victimization. Referring to media reports which talk about the "victims of communism", he rejected this status, arguing that "Maybe some people consider themselves victims of the regime, but victims do not react, so it cannot be about us. Communism was our enemy and we decided to fight whatever the risk. We carried this fight until the end, so we are not victims."[289] However, the stereotype is largely used in public debates and in the media, but also in historiographical works related to the subjects of the communist repression.[290]

Unlike Ogoranu, who became a public figure after 1989, the other partisan who survived the political repression, Ion Ilioiu, lived an anonymous life (see Fig. 17). Until his death, in October 2012, he gave very few interviews and did not write his memoirs. In the early 1990, when Ogoranu asked his friend to contribute to his memoirs, the latter sent a consistent letter explaining the tortures endured during the ten years spent in prison. In his testimony—then published in one of Ogoranu's volumes—Ilioiu stressed that talking about his suffering is reliving it, which is too painful.[291] Ilioiu also hinted at his motivation in joining the fight: "If I had not joined the group, I would have been a coward. I had no other thought besides this: I loved my country and I was ready to die for it."[292] He never gave public speeches, but in private conversations

Fig. 17. Ion Ilioiu, member of the Făgăraș Group. Photo: Ioana Hașu (April 2012).

[289] Video interview with Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, 1998. Personal archive.
[290] The Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania—the so-called Tismăneanu Commission—extensively used the term in its final report. Consulted online: http://www.presidency.ro/static/ordine/RAPORT_FINAL_CPADCR.pdf [Last accessed June 6, 2015].
[291] Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng*, vol. II, pp. 78-81.
[292] Cited by Dorin Dobrincu, "Rezistența armată anticomunistă," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie*, p. 441.

he stated that despite the suffering attached to the experience, he does not regret the decisions of the 1950s: " I did what I had to do. If it were to happen again, I would do the same."[293]

The post 1989 image of the Făgăraș Group in the public sphere was shaped around Ogoranu's recollections. Due to the spectacular nature of his life-story and to his presence in the public space, his image was associated with the image of the whole group. As a consequence, depending on the ideological persuasion of the observer, the Fărgăraș Group was either heroized or demonized. The influences in the Romanian public sphere will be discussed in the last section of this chapter. Before that, for a better understanding of the memory, the next section concentrates on oral history interviews with people who participated in the resistance and did not write their memoirs.

4.2. Postmemory and photographs as links to a "memory chain"

This section is an incursion into the unexplored *postmemory* of armed resistance in the case of two families who were part of the movement. The subjects are the wives and the children of the partisans Gheorghe Hașu and Ioan Pop. Both men—husbands and fathers—were executed in 1957 and their family members had to endure further persecution. When talking to their relatives, I found myself facing a wall of silence: in most of the families the subject was hardly discussed and younger generations had no idea about the past of their ancestors. Knowing that they were followed and that listening devices were installed in their homes, people who had been persecuted did not talk about their experiences until 1989, not even with family members. Although the survivors seemed originally reluctant towards the idea of telling their stories, I would not define their attitude as a refusal to talk, but rather as a genuine impossibility to narrate their painful experiences.

[293] Private discussion with Ion Ilioiu, September 2011.

The only tools that triggered memories during my interviews with relatives of the partisans turned to be old family photographs. Faced with these visual objects, people recalled past trauma and created, some of them for the first time, a coherent narration around it. The images have peculiar meanings for different generations of the same family and they function as links of a broken "chain of memory," understood in the light of Daniele Hervieu-Leger's work, as a process by which individual persons become members of a community and restore connections with other members of the same group.[294] For the participants in this study, seeing the photographs equates to reliving a past trauma and giving a new meaning to it. The first outcome of the process is memory reconstruction; in this, people also recover their identity.

My first interlocutor was Ioan Pop's wife. Our dialogue had a stumbled start: *"I don't really know what can be of interest for you... What could I say?"*[295]—Maria Pop kindly replied after I asked her to tell me what she remembered of her husband's fight against the communist regime. She was 94 years old when we met and she had seen her husband for the last time in 1956, when she was 37. Ioan Pop joined the group in the mountains in 1951, one year after the armed resistance started in Făgăraș. He was caught five years later and was executed in 1957, together with five other members of his group. The oldest member of the Făgăraș anticommunist group, he was born in the US (Ohio) to a family of Romanian immigrants. Pop came to Romania with his parents when he was around three years old. He entered the Securitate black list for being a kulak and for having connections with the partisans.

When Ioan Pop left home, his wife Maria was pregnant with their second child—a girl who never knew her father. When we met, this girl was a woman in her 60s, Cornelia Năftănăilă; she was the one with whom I arranged the interview. Both mother and daughter

[294] See Daniele Hervieu-Leger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).
[295] Excerpt of interview with Maria Pop conducted in September 2013.

kept saying that the real story of resistance was in the mountains, where clashes between the partisans and the political police took place, and that they did not know what had happened there, since they stayed at home. Despite the fact that they expressed a willingness to help me reconstruct the story of the partisan who was a part of their family, both the wife and daughter of Ioan Pop gave me short answers, apologizing for not remembering much. However, when I asked if they had any photographs or documents that belonged to Ioan Pop, the partisan's daughter disappeared in another room. When Cornelia came back she seemed to have entered a different mood.

With almost religious gestures, the partisan's daughter carefully held with both hands a fragment of a photograph (Figure 18). *"This is a very dear photograph of my mother and my father. It is a picture with them together, at their wedding"*[296], she said, and then she carefully put the picture on the table cloth, which we sat around. It was not a whole picture, but what was left of a photograph showing her mother proudly wearing her traditional wedding costume; the only trace of her father are his shoes and half of his legs. They are not at all together, as Cornelia claimed, but rather separated. The photograph was torn apart by a political police officer, during a house search, in 1952, when Ioan Pop was already in the mountains. Perhaps the Securitate officer wanted to have the image of the wanted man, or he tried to destroy a memory artifact; or maybe both. One thing is for sure: the photograph was diagonally split in two.

[296] Ibid.

Figure 18. Torn wedding photograph of Maria and Ioan Pop (1935). The bride wears the Romanian traditional folk costume; the groom's shoes can be seen in the lower part of the photograph. The picture was photographed on a table cloth. Courtesy of the Pop family.

Despite Ioan Pop's absence from the photograph, both mother and daughter bent over the half-picture and started talking about the missing part of the photograph. They described what cannot be seen anymore. Eighty years after the wedding of her parents, Cornelia recalls:

> As you can see, my father is wearing an elegant suit, not a traditional Romanian costume, because he lived for some years in Bucharest. He came back to the village because my mother could not adapt to the life in the capital. She was only 17, you know, and she wanted to be close to her parents; so out of love for her, my father eventually gave up his job and returned to this village, at the bottom of these mountains, where both of their families lived and where we are still living.

Indeed, one can assume that Ioan Pop was wearing an elegant suit, even though one cannot actually see it. Only the lower part of the dark coloured pants and the matching shoes can be traced in the photograph. Without holding hands or embracing, bride and groom stand next to each other, shoulder to shoulder. The photograph was taken in 1935, eleven years before the communists seized power, in a Photo Studio in Făgăraș, the closest town to their village. By mentioning the mountains that are not a part of the photograph, Cornelia hints at the trauma related to the anticommunist resistance. In thier families, the partisans were called "the boys in the mountains." In this context, the term "mountains" loses its geographical reference and becomes a coded word related to the anticommunist fight; for the opponents of the regime, "the mountains" mean resistance and also suffering.

Fig. 19. Cornelia Năftănăilă, the daughter of Ioan Pop. Photo: Ioana Hașu (September 2012)

Cornelia Năftănăilă (see Fig. 19) never knew her father, because she was born four months after Ioan Pop went into the mountains. She has never seen the full photograph, but she described it as if it was intact in front of ther eyes. Somehow she

seemed to "see" the missing groom in the picture and by seeing him she "remembered" what she had never lived through. It is part of what Marianne Hirsch calls "postmemory", a term coined to define "the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before".[297] While talking about her father, Cornelia Năftănăilă points her finger to the missing part of the photograph, touching the table cloth:

> One year after my father went into the mountains, the communists forced her to file for divorce. They hoped he would attend court and they could arrest him. Of course neither of them went to the trial, neither my mother or my father, but the sentence was pronunced anyway. Despite this, mom never remarried. After my father was executed, she considered herself a widow and it remained like this for the rest of her life. She has been single since she was 30 years old, but she has been always the wife of my father.

At this point, Cornelia Năftănăilă engaged in a conversation with her mother and they reconstructed the circumstances of the partisan's departure in the mountains. Ioan Pop finally became very much present in our dialogue. Facing his apparent absence, his daughter revealed the constant presence of this man in the life of his family over the last decades. Whitout many questions from my part, they remembered the reasons behind his decision to fight against the communist regime and many details of their life while he was in the mountains. By touching the table cloth where the missing part of the photograph should have been if the document had been intact, they recalled Ioan's missing life and pointed to his missing body. In fact, no one knows where the bodies were buried after the partisans were shot dead; hence, their bodies are literally still missing. In this sense, Ioan Pop and the photographic image of himself had similar fates: just like nobody knew what happened to his actual body, no one can say where the missing part of the picture is.

For an ordinary viewer, the photograph could be seen as the representation of ruined lives: a woman standing near what remained of her husband's representation, namely some very-difficult-to-trace-legs in black trousers, melting into the dark background of the picture;

[297] Mariane Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, p. 5

from this perspective, the photograph can be considered an image of a split family, a destroyed marriage. Nevertheless, the same photograph had a totally different meaning for the daughter of the missing partisan: she looked at the nonexisting part of the photograph and saw the representation of the omnipresent father that she had never met. It was in front of his apparent absence that she could finally "remember". For a while, we looked at the same picture and saw different things: I saw the bride, whereas they "saw" the groom—a question of visual interpretation and, at the same time, as Oksana Sarkisova and Olga Shevcenko discuss in their work, a matter of "a particular kind of looking and seeing".[298] Citing the work of Allan Sekula, they argue that a photograph offers the frame of "a possibility that is actualized in the act of interpretation".[299]

Another explanation of the constant presence of the missing partisan within his family is linked precisely to traumatic memory and its features. Unlike other types of experiences, trauma resists integration, as Mike Bal highlights in the introduction to a book dedicated to "cultural memorization as an activity occurring in the present, in which the past is continuously modified and re-described even if it continues to shape the future."[300] Sociological studies prove that traumatic events cannot be digested like common life happenings. This contradiction between the necessity to ingest one's past and one's will to forget suffering generates an internal struggle: trauma is part of the personal past, but is at the same time rejected, because of the pain entangled within. This constant fight makes trauma very present in the everyday life of the ones who experienced it. Among other reasons, Ioan Pop was part of everyday life in his family, because of the collective trauma that all members of the family share.

[298] Oksana Sarkisova and Olga Shevchenko, "They came, shot everyone, and that's the end of it': Local Memory, Amateur Photography, and the Legacy of State Violence in Novocherkassk", *Slavonica*, vol. 17, no. 2, November 2011, p. 88 .
[299] Ibid., p. 91.
[300] Mike Bal, introduction to *Acts of Memory*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), viii.

Furthermore, the photograph is not a recollection of the wedding, even though it was taken at the wedding. It is rather the evidence of violent state repression and it recalls memories of the brutal intervention of the political police into people's everyday life. By tearing the picture, the Securitate officer transformed it into a different object, with a different meaning. The missing part brings back the phantom of transgenerational suffering within this family: it was not only the groom and the bride who had to endure it, but also their offsprings, who did not get the chance to know their father and who were then stigmatized and labeled as "children of the bandit". Besides the transgenerational suffering that was transmitted by parents to their children through words, silences, and behaviours, there was also the tangible pain of stigma. It was not only the "pain of the other", but a new pain inflicted on the new generation and produced by new facts, in connection to the old events.

This visual artifact can be interpreted also as a political response over time to the violence of the communist state. Pop's family shows that the connection between present and previous generations cannot be destroyed from outside. Discussing the nature of the totalitarian state, Hannah Arendt emphasizes two features that were surmounted by Pop's family. She states that in totalitarian societies, people vanish "without leaving behind them such ordinary traces of former existence as a body and a grave"[301]; then she continues by arguing that "they [the concentration camps and prisons] took away the individual's own death, proving that henceforth nothing belonged to him and he belonged to no one."[302] Although it is true that Ioan Pop seemed to have been wiped out by the political apparatus—there is no body, no grave, no image, no identification documents left—he is, nevertheless, as present as one can be within one's family. Around his apparent missing existence, family members strengthened connections; by "seeing" the whole photograph, Cornelia and Maria were undoing the rupture and healing its aftermath.

[301] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (San Diego: Harcourt, Inc., 1976), p 434.
[302] Ibid., p 452.

The torn wedding picture had two different "lives", each related to its two different functions. The existence of this photograph began in 1935, at the wedding of Ioan and Maria, when the picture was taken; its function was to remember the joy of the moment over time. However, the fate of the document dramatically changed after 1951—togehter with the fate of the two subjects of the picture--when the photograph was torn apart. Since that moment, it recalls not what it depicts—namely the wedding moment—but the violent rupture within the family, and also its healing stems from it. It is precisely why the oral narration of the past trauma was embroied around this artifact. Consequently, my interview with Ioan Pop's wife and with his daughter really started only when the photograph was brought in. While the memories were verbalized, the picture remained in our midst. The half-photograph functioned as a whole family-photo album. After the story was told, Cornelia took the picture and went to put it back in its place. When she returned, they added nothing to what had already been said.

Gheorghe Haşu's memory within his family also reveals the role of photographs as visual artifacts in recalling supressed memories and healing the trauma. He was a carpenter with no political affiliation, from a wealthy peasant family. He went into hiding after his parents' home had been searched by the Securitate. On that occasion, his father was arrested with no warrant. Gheorghe Haşu and Ioan Pop were close friends and the only married men among the group in the mountains. When Gheorghe left his home and went into hiding, his wife was pregnant with their second child, a boy that never knew his father. Just like Ioan Pop's wife, the authorities forced Gheorghe's spouse to file for divorce and to delimit herself from her husband's "terrorist" deeds. However, she was repeatedly arrested and brutally interrogated both before and after the divorce. Eugenia Haşu and her children were stigmatized and followed by the Securitate until the fall of the communist regime.

The subject of anticommunist resistance and the fate of Gheorghe Haşu were taboo topics within the family. His grandchildren accidentaly learned the story of their grandfather

in late 1990s, from people who knew the man who fought in the mountains, not from their own family. In this case, the third generation, myself included, traced past trauma, driven by "postmemory" flashbacks. As Mariane Hirsch describes the process, it is a matter of "oscilliation between continuity and rupture", "a structure of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience".[303]

Literally translated, the Greek word "trauma" means "wound". Etymologically speaking, the terms have the same meaning. Based on this, I will use them interchangeably in this paragraph. The question of transgenerational wound is summed up by Kaja Silverman, who comes to the conclusion that: "[i]f to remember is to provide the disembodied 'wound' with a physic residence, then to remember other people's memories is to be wounded by their wounds."[304] As scholars working in the field of collective and cultural memory claim, remembering is part of the healing process of wound [trauma] and the remembering process requires narration.[305] But what exactly is the role of narration? What triggers the narration of trauma? Can wound be narrated?

Within the Hașu family, the link between trauma and photographs related to traumatic memories is explicit. The only picture of Gheorghe Hașu left in the family was saved by one of his sisters in early 1950s, when the man went into hiding. Fearing that the Securitate would confiscate the photograph, the women sewed the document on the back side of a religious icon which was hung on the wall in their home. From this moment, the very image of the partisan went into hiding, as the man himself did. When Gheorghe was executed, his image continued its underground existence.

[303] Mariane Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory*, p 6.
[304] Kaja Silverman, *Threshold of the Visible World*, (East Sussex: Psychology Press, 1996), p. 189.
[305] See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, pp. 46-54, and Mike Bal, Introduction to *Acts of Memory*, vii-xvii.

The partisan's name and his memory were stained, and his picture followed the same fate in the years before 1989. His photographic representation remained hidden, out of fear that it could be considered a manifest against the regime. The significant detail, though, is that for many years after the communism collapsed, the photograph stayed in its place. No one dared to take it out. Not because it was dangerous, but because it was the representation of trauma, despite the fact that it does not have a direct link to communist repression. The confrontation with the picture was delayed because features of past trauma were embedded in it.

Fig. 20. Gheorghe Hașu, before he went into hiding (late 1940s). Courtesy of the Hașu family

In this small 5x8 centimeter portrait, young Gheorghe Hașu smiles confidently, seeming to be looking to his future life (see Fig. 20). He must have been in his mid or late twenties. The Second World War was over and he eventually returned home safe, after being wounded and decorated. In the picture, he has a confrontational gaze, with his head a bit bent to his left, and straight shoulders; there is warmth in his eyes and in his smile. Even though the whole body cannot be seen, Gheorghe has the posture of a man in good physical shape, with a confident and optimistic demeanor. He is wearing a traditional folk costume from his home village near Făgăraș: a white homemade shirt on which he put a sheepskin vest hand embroidered with traditional colorful patterns that cannot be seen in the black-and-white image. The photograph was probably taken in a Photo Studio in Făgăraș, possibly during Christmas time, when young people from villages used to participate in traditional meetings and dances, where taking pictures was an integral part of the event.

Most probably, the picture was taken right after the war ended and is like a window to that time: a telescopic view of a world of hope, after the terror of the war scattered, a world in which people were trying to carry on with their lives, confident in their future. It is also a world of attachment to old values: the traditional costume is something to wear on special occasions, not a shame, as it shall become during the socialist industrialization, when people threw away their hand-embroidered traditional clothing and put on the collective worker uniforms. The trauma related to this photograph is the wound of a violently broken world that disappeared during the communist repression, together with its subjects and their values. In this sense, the picture is a statement in itself. It stands for the life of the Romanian village before communism took power.

Nobody in the Haşu family knows when exactly the portrait of Gheorghe came back to life. His sister took it out from the back of the icon on the wall where it rested for more than 40 years. It was again the third generation, namely Gheorghe Haşu's grandchildren who framed the picture and displayed it next to other old and new family pictures. It seemed that by resting for half a century behind an icon, Ghita's photograph borrowed the symbolism of the religious painting. That is, it became not a representation, but a presence. For members of his family, who looked at it with different "eyes," it mirrored the spiritual body of the partisan rather than the physical one. He is the same over time: ageless, smiling, optimistic, despite everything that happened. Just like in the case of icons, the portrait is a means of summoning the actual presence of the subject represented. By doing so, this visual artifact contributes to healing the trauma of absence. In a way, the man was always present, but could not be seen: during communism, the photograph faced the wall, behind another picture. However, it was there. For dozens of years, family members who stood in front of that icon, perhaps thinking about the partisan, stood also in front of him, since the photograph and the picture on the wall became one. By coming out of hiding, by turning his face, the photographical portrait made

the presence obvious and fulfilled a need of his family: the painful need of having him around.[306]

Some years ago, at the beginning of my research related to the Făgăraș anticommunist resistance, attempts to get more information about Gheorghe Hașu from his wife and children failed. They claimed that they simply did not remember, that it all happened so long ago, and that they did not know what to tell anyway. Because I did not have much information myself, I could not formulate very specific questions, but only general ones, which were not helpful for our dialogue. I have created the frame for recalling trauma by showing them a collage in A4 size, consisting of two portrait photographs of Gheorghe Hașu (see Fig. 21).[307]

Fig. 21. Scanned image of a collage with Gheorghe Hașu before and after arrest. Source: Ioana Hașu.

[306] For an analysis about the symbol of icons, see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).
[307] I scanned and increased the size of the two photographs before putting them side-by-side, in order to use the collage as a workshop prop, during a summer camp for children interested in recent Romanian history.

The first photograph is the one discussed in the paragraphs above. On the right side, there is another portrait of Gheorghe Hașu, at the time when he was arrested. It was taken by the Securitate, probably ten to fifteen years after the first one.

There are some similarities between the two pictures: they are both portraits of the same person—showing the man only from his chest above, and they were both taken indoors. The differences are very powerful: whereas on the left side, the young peasant smiles serene, on the right side there is a mature man, with the same confrontational gaze, but his eyes show no trace of optimism, he is no longer witness to the future, but probably faces the actual spotlights of the Securitate office directed at him. He is not in his late 20s, but around 35 years old, after more than 6 years spent in hiding, haunted by the political police. In the first photograph, he seems to be dreaming about his future, while looking around for a good wife. In the second picture, he knows that he would never see his actual wife and his two children, and he also knows that after his death, they will continue to be stigmatized. He is slimmer, worried, maybe angry, and the wrinkles on his face are signs of the years of fight, struggle, and deprivations. The arrested Gheorghe Hașu is poorly dressed: he is wearing a worn-out shirt and a modest suit jacket. Ironically, the pattern of his shirt resembles the "zeghe"—the stripped prison cloth that he probably had to put on shortly after this picture was taken. This second portrait is a telescopic view to another world, that had no connection to the one brought in by the first photograph—it is the world of a totalitarian state in which the opponents were purged.

When I showed the collage with the two portraits of her husband to Gheorghe Hașu's widow, she stared at the images for a moment and then turned to me puzzled: "The one on the left is Ghiță. But who is the other man?" After another moment, she put the photographs away and started to cry whispering to herself: "He is so slim... They starved for years." After a while, she took again the collage and looked at the portrait on the left: "My husband was

handsome. And he was quite tall, just like my grandsons." This was the beginning of a long process of recalling past memories within the family, a process in which her children, now both grandparents themselves, participated.

Unlike Pop's wife, Eugenia Hașu did not have any family photographs until late 1990, when the first portrait of the partisan, the one she recognized, was circulated within the family. However, she definitely knew what her husband looked like when he was in the mountains, because they met from time to time before he was arrested. It was not the difficulty of recognizing his figure when she first saw the picture taken by the Securitate, but rather the denial of the trauma recalled, the rejection of the world this other portrait stands for. Afterwards, looking at and referring to this collage, she started to talk about the communist repression. It seemed to be a painful process of constructing a narration from pieces of recalled traumatic memories, and not the simple process of retelling a story. The "story" had not been told before.

A sign of trauma healing was the moment in which the first portrait of Gheorghe Hașu discussed here (Fig. 20) was multiplied and displayed in the houses of his wife, his children, and grandchildren, near other family photographs. By being displayed, the trauma beyond this portrait was accepted as a shared suffering. It was a collective pain that did not bring rupture, but led to stronger bonds between family members through generations.

Trauma is "prenarrative"—Marita Sturken asserts, exploring the way in which "memory and amnesia are entangled in the experience of trauma".[308] What she means is that basically trauma cannot be contained by narration, just as wound cannot be narrated, but only felt. Other authors make a clear distinction between trauma and memory. Bessel A. van der

[308] Marita Sturken, "Narratives of Recovery" in *Acts of Memory*, p.235.

Kolk and Onno van der Hart,[309] both working in the field of cultural memory, assert that "memory is an action", whereas "trauma is an event". In their view, memory is not something that people have, but something that they actively make. The idea is developed further by Ernst von Alpen who reasons that the term "traumatic memory" is in fact a misnomer: there is a contradiction between memory, as act of narrating the past, and trauma, as a vivid, constant presence of a horrific event in everyday life.[310] "Past" consists of the events that were integrated--namely lived, accepted, digested, with their own linked meaning. Opposite to that, trauma is a shocking event which cannot be integrated as common life events can, therefore it remains present, it continues to develop. Based on this idea, von Alpen comes to the conclusion that trauma is "a failed experience". Why is trauma not an experience? Because experience implies participation of the subject, and trauma does not presume active self-participation of the subject; trauma—as wound—was inflicted upon the subject from outside. Trauma can be healed and integrated by narration and by being narrated it becomes part of the past, it finally enters memory. In the same way in which wound calls to be healed and taken care of by releasing stimuli that draw attention to it, trauma calls to be healed through narration and it resists integration until it is narrated. Narration gives trauma the shape of experience, by forcing the narrator to take part in it, to define his or her role in the story.

After dozens of years of traumatic amnesia related to communist repression, people who opposed the regime have the space to face their "failed experience", digest their trauma, to create a narration around it and to finally integrate it in their past. The process is complex layered and not self-triggering. In the cases discussed here, the visual objects that called trauma reenactment are family photographs with their rich symbolic meanings. Pictures create the virtual space for reenacting the trauma and offer a "place" of encounter between past and

[309] See Bessel A. van der Kolk, and Onno van der Hart, "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma", in Cathy Caruth (ed.) *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 158-153.
[310] Ernst von Alpen, *Acts of Memory*, pp. 25-36.

present members of a family. Past suffering becomes collective, and by inviting different generations to take part in the experience, they bring not personal, but transgenerational healing. By serving this purpose, the photographs become links of a broken chain of memory. The chain is formed by past generational experiences and the gaps are the traumatic events that resisted integration. The images help trauma to become memory, they cover the gaps, and by doing this they fill the gaps, wipe the traumatic amnesia and reconstruct the chain of memory.

4.3. Post-1989 public debates

People mentioned in the previous section and supporters discussed in the third chapter of this thesis are not present in public discourses related to the Făgăraș Group. Although primary sources related to the armed anti-communist movement are at hand and many people who participated in the resistance are still alive, they are not cited in the post-1989 public debates. Based on the fact that the first consistent accounts on the topic were written by the leader of the group, for many the image of the Făgăraș Group equated to the image of Ogoranu. In media accounts and in the public sphere (public debates, movies, documentaries), the partisans who fought on the northern slope of the Făgăraș Mountain are known as the Ogoranu Group. Most references related to the theme mention him and not the previous leaders or other members.[311] Some highlighted his Legionary past and reinforced the Securitate discourse, stating that it was an extremist movement led by a fascist. Others took

[311] After the Revolution, Ogoranu was the subject of countless media reports and interviews dedicated to the Făgăraș Group. A brief selection from mainstream media: Lavinia Betea, "O 'poveste ca-n filme': Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu" ["A 'movie-like story': Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu], *Jurnalul Național*, April 10, 2005; Marian Costache, *"Un erou 'necunoscut': Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu"* [*"An 'unknown' hero: Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu"*], *Formula As*, no: 728, (2006); Ionuț Baiaș, "*Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, luptatorul din rezistența care timp de 30 de ani nu a putut fi prins de Securitate*" [*Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, the Resistance Fighter Who Eluded the Securitate for 30 Years*], Hotnews.ro, January 2, 2012; Dorin Timonea, "Revoluția partizanilor conduși de Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu – simbol al lupteri împotriva regimului comunist" [The Revolution of the Partisans led by Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu – Symbol of the Fight Against the Communist Regime"], *Adevărul*, April 28, 2014.

Ogoranu's statements about the self-sacrifice of partisans as the only relevant aspect and heroizied the resistance, in line with the Western discourse of the 1950s. On both sides, Ogoranu was portrayed only through his Legionary affiliation and his image was projected on the whole movement, treated as a monolith.

After Ogoranu's death in 2006, the controversies around the Făgăraș Group became more prominent in the public sphere especially after the making of a movie on the topic. *Portretul luptătorului la tinerețe* [*The Portray of the Fighter as a Young Man*] is a fictional documentary produced in 2010 by Constantin Popescu.[312] Oversimplifying the story and mixing information from the Securitate files and Ogoranu's memoirs with legends and fiction, the director claims to present the dramatized history of the group. Using real names and dates with no background real details, he constructs a mythical image of the resistance. In Popescu's movie, the partisan appears as a young man hiding in the mountains and shooting whomever he meets with no clear purpose. However, the confusing message and genre of the movie generated fewer debates than the political affiliation of the main character, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu. Media and public figures took again one of the two antagonistic sides: either praising resistance and the partisans or condemning the movie for portraying in a favorable light Legionaries. Same controversies arose during the past years among historians generating debates for or against the partisans.[313]

[312] The historical drama was first presented on February 12, 2010 at the Berlin International Film Festival. Before seeing the movie, the Elie Wiesel Institute send an open letter asking for the screening to be cancelled. The organizers refused, arguing that the movie was not a documentary and that it does not disuss the political affiliation of the partisans. They also stressed that they do not support censorship. The controvercy was covered by the Romanian media. See for instance Iulia Blaga, "Institutul Elie Wiesel a cerut interzicerea 'Portretului Luptătorului la Tinerețe' pe motiv că e un documentar fascist. Constatin Popescu: Când discuți despre un film, e bine să îl și vezi," ["Elie Wiesel Institute asked for the movie 'The Portray of the Fighter as a Young Man,' to be banned on the grounds that it was a fascist documentary. Constatin Popescu: When you discuss a movie, it is good to see it first"], *Hotnews.ro*: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-film-6921322-video-institutul-elie-wiesel-cerut-directorului-festivalului-berlin-interzicerea-portretul-luptatorului-tinerete-motiv-documentar-fascist-constantin-popescu-pentru-hotnews-cand-vrei-discuti-despre-fil.htm [Last accessed May 25, 2014].

[313] The Institute for the Investigation of the Crimes of Communism had contradictory approaches to the Făgăraș Group. In April 2013, the institution organized a public lecture presented by William Totok and titled "A Critical Reconsideration of the Past. Between Myth and Minimization. On Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu and the Romanian Armed Anti-Communist Resistance." At stake was Ogoranu's political affiliation, extrapolated to the Făgăraș

On the 23th of July 2014, the Romanian climber Alex Găvan dedicated his ascension to the Broad Peak of the Karakorum Mountains in Pakistan to the memory of the anti-communist fighters, mentioning the partisans from the Făgăraș Mountains.[314] His gesture generated a wave of sympathy for the partisans in the mass-media and on social networks, where photographs of the fighters were used and abused by ordinary people and by far right groups alike, who speculated the moment to promote their own agenda. With different purposes, the fighters were pictured as national heroes and models.

The last public debate extensively covered in media started in December 2014 and split historians and public actors between those who defend the Făgăraș resistance and those who condemn it. The row started when the newly elected president of Romania, Klaus Iohannis decorated The Association of Romanian Former Political Prisoners (AFDPR) for carrying the fight against the communist regime. The medal was handed to Octav Bjoza, the president of the organization. After the ceremony, Iohannis was virulently criticized by Centrul pentru Monitorizarea și Combaterea Antisemitismului [The Center for Monitoring and Fighting Antisemitism]. The organization issued a public letter condemning Bjoza for "showing up alongside supporters of the Legionary Movement," hinting at his participation at commemorative events for the Făgăraș Group. [315] Bjoza replied that he has never been a Legionary and that he had no connection to the movement. He explained that he only attended religious commemorations for people killed during the communist repression and that

Group presented as representative for the whole phenomenon of armed resistance in Romania. It was an opportunity for far right organizations to defend and praise Ogoranu for his Legionary past. In May 2015, same Institute participated in a public screening (at the Museum of History in Bucharest) of an episode from the documentary *The Memorial of Suffering*, discussing the Ogoranu Group in a rather positive manner.

[314] News on the topic were published and broadcast by private radio stations, news agencies, and newspapers in Romania. For several days, the reports went viral on Facebook and Tweeter.

[315] News on the public letter issued by Centrul pentru Monitorizarea și Combaterea Antisemitismului: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-18942000-centrul-pentru-combaterea-antisemitismului-critica-decizia-lui-klaus-iohannis-decora-octav-bjoza-semnat-dezamagitor-act-populism.htm

ceremonies do not discuss the political color of the dead.[316] However, the debate between historians continued online. In a public dialogue covered by the Romanian media, historian Vladimir Tismăneanu called Ogoranu a "impenitent Legionary" whereas historian Marius Oprea considered him a "moral prototype."[317]

During the last years, the public interest in the theme of armed resistance also grew in the Făgăraș region. In 2014, the Făgăraș town-hall erected the first monument dedicated to the partisans (see Fig. 22). Shortly after, a public commemoration attended by local authorities took place there for the first time.[318] Parallel ceremonies take place every year, at the bottom of the Făgăraș Mountains, where families of the partisans erected in 1995 the first monument dedicated to the Group (see Fig 23). The meeting became public events and are organized on the first Sunday after the Saint Elijah's Day.[319] Among the first organizers were the surviving partisans—Ogoranu and Ilioiu—but also women from the families of other members of the group. They were the catalyst of the healing process within their families. Immediately after the Revolution, they started to hold annual commemorations of their beloved ones, remaking the broken bonds between the persecuted families. Around these sites, private memories are recalled in the public space and shared with members of the local community including descendants of the partisans who know nothing about their family history during communism. In this process, a new discourse about the Făgăraș Group is in the making. It might be absorbed by the mainstream opposite views or it might impose its

[316] For news on the topic: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-18942000-centrul-pentru-combaterea-antisemitismului-critica-decizia-lui-klaus-iohannis-decora-octav-bjoza-semnat-dezamagitor-act-populism.htm. An interview with Octav Bjoza in *Gândul*: http://www.gandul.info/interviurile-gandul/confesiunea-legionarului-octav-bjoza-tanar-fiind-intrand-la-19-ani-si-cateva-luni-in-temnita-eram-avid-in-a-lua-de-la-fiecare-daca-gaseam-ce-avea-el-mai-bun-si-am-luat-de-la-toti-13742440. [Last accessed May 23, 2015].

[317] A recent blog entry by Vladimir Tismăneanu: http://www.contributors.ro/politica-doctrine/anticomunism-%C8%99i-antifascism-marius-oprea-%C8%99i-idealurile-lui-ion-Gavrilă-ogoranu/ [Last accessed May 23, 2015]. Meanwhile, public figures continued to praise Ogoranu and his fellows.

[318] The monument was dedicated "To the "Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in the Făgăraș County" and it was financed from the local budget of the Town Hall. It was inaugurated on the 27th September 20014 and the first public ceremony at the site took place in on the 9th of March 2015, the Day of the Martyrs in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

[319] In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, Saint Elijah is celebrated on the 20th of July.

new narrative over the discourses that marked both the communist period and the post-1989 society.

Fig. 22. The Monument of the Făgăraș Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in the town of Făgăraș. It was erected in 2014 at the entrance of the Făgăraș Medieval Castle, the most visited turistic spot in the region.

Photo: Ioana Hașu (April 2014)

Fig. 23. Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu speaking in front of the Mounument dedicated to the Făgăraș Group at the Sâmbata Monastery – Făgăraș Mountains.

Commemoration, July 2002.

Photo: Ioana Hașu.

Conclusion

Exploring how the memory of the Făgăraș Group was constructed, one can understand the present controversies on the topic. Based on the single memoirs of Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, the memory of the whole movement was reduced in the public sphere to the political affiliation and public image of one of its leaders. Some see him—and consequently all partisans—as a hero, whereas others see him as an extremist. Recollections of other survivors of the political repression in the Făgăraș County are not voiced within debates related to the group, even though the consistent supporting network was the pillar of the Făgăraș resistance.

The *postmemory* of the Făgăraș Group shapes a new discourse with respect to the political repression and proposes a rounded image of the people who fought against the regime. While reconstructing their autobiographical memory, survivors and their descendants define their identity and refute mainstream interpretations. They do not see themselves either as heroes or as victims. While recalling their traumatic memories and decrypting family photographs, the survivors of the Făgăraș movement define themselves and participate in completing the post-communist memory of the group they were part of.

The growing interest in the theme manifested in various cyrcles of the Romanian public sphere during the past years can indicate the need for discussing the recent past and its legacy. The sites of memory created with the construction of new monuments offer the space for a new discourse about the pheomenon, which include—for the first time—the narrations of various people who participated in the movement.

CONCLUSIONS
A rounded view on the Făgăraș Group

The Securitate files and the Radio Free Europe archive produced in the 1950s, when the Făgăraș Group was active, mirror two antagonistic discourses about the armed resistance in the mountains. Clashing and intertwining within the framework of the Cold War, the communist discourse and the Western counter-propaganda set the first black-and-white model of interpreting the movement: the partisans were either terrorists or heroes. A comparative analysis of the two corpus data disclose how the same facts and the same sources were interpreted through the lenses of two ideological "truths." The ethnographical reading of the archival systems reveals the political apparatus behind the propaganda and the working process of those who produced it. The inconsistencies and biases of one set of corpus data speak better when confronted with the gaps and pitfalls of the other. Besides some similarities, one can also point to the significant differences between the Securitate and the RFE discourses, based on different methods of collecting data and aimed at distinct purposes. However, writing the history of the group based on one archival system only has serious limitations.

When new sources are brought into analysis, a rounded view on the history and memory of the Făgăraș Group emerges. The Făgăraș resistance is anything but homogeneous. There are significant nuances regarding the partisans' social and political background. With respect to their motivations, the armed anti-communist movement was not only a fight against the regime, as the communist prosecutors stressed, but also a struggle for survival carried by people turned into outcasts by a regime which labeled its enemies before knowing them. Many of them had no choice but to withdraw from society, an irrevocable decision. In this circle, repression and resistance fuelled each other and amplified the war between the state

and the "bandits." Besides the partisans, crucial actors of the anti-communist movement were the supporters of the partisans, people of different ages, genders, political affiliations, social strata, and religious convictions. They are overlooked by the archival systems of the Cold War and ignored in the post-communist public discourses. Historiographical works, media accounts, public debates, and movies portrayed the men in the mountains only, and reduced their image to some stereotypical features, neglecting other participants in the movement and other available sources.

In part, the deeds of the men and women involved in the anti-communist movement can be considered heroic. Among them, I would mention the strength and fidelity of women who did not give up on their life values and did not betray, even at the price of enduring years of persecution and a life-time stigma. Overlooked by the Securitate, which saw them as extensions of their men and tools through which they could be caught, women stood up one more time on the side of resistance after 1989. Invisible for researchers of the phenomenon, they contributed to shaping the memory of resistance and helped their families to overcome suffering. In a post-communist society seeking victims and victimizers and less for reconciliation, women commemorate their dead and talk about healing through forgiveness. They would reject this term, but maybe they are the silent heroes of armed resistance.

Keeping the black-and-white framework for the sake of revealing its flaws, one can argue that the partisans had their white moments, such as the decision to never be the first to open fire against soldiers sent after them or not to seek revenge against those who supported the regime's political repression. They did not use violence against the civilian population, regardless of people's political stand or other criteria. From a certain point on, the men in the mountains realized that they cannot attain victory; nevertheless they won in a sense by not giving up to their fight. None of them surrendered or sided with the communists in order to save their lives. However, they had their moments of weakness and despair and there are

black spots on their biographies, such as the Legionary affiliation of some of the fighters. The survivors did not hide the controversial aspects of their lives and never proposed themselves as role models. Seeing only the black or the white part of their lives is creating fictional characters and reinforcing once again the ideological propaganda of the Cold War. Heroizing as well as demonizing them equates to washing out their identities and throwing them again into a category. People engaged in the fight against the communist regime were in fact ordinary men and women with sometimes extraordinary reactions to extreme life circumstances. A fair and nuanced examination of their stories and profiles opens a telescopic view on the dramatic changes of the Romanian society during the first years of communism. The general image, however, is disclosed only through individual analyzes of their biographies. In this, they are removed from any category (be it the one of terrorists or heroes) and are given back their complex identity.

The analysis of the Securitate files with respect to the Făgăraș Group completes the image of the Romanian secret police and shows the chaotic working practices of the 1950s, when the institution was fighting to consolidate the power of the communist regime, while at the same time was trying to purge the "enemies of the state." Following the biographies of people involved in the armed resistance movement, one can trace the long-term agency of the files, which twisted the lives of their subjects. The image of justice and its abusive practices in the first years of communism transpires through the trials of the partisans and through the reports of high-rank state officials. State violence and its interference in the private sphere are reflected in the minutes of house searches and interrogations. On the other side of the Iron Curtain, another propaganda was produced. The critical reading of the RFE archive, on the other hand, discloses the biases of the Western discourse on the topic, but also the different means used to produce it. Further research is needed in order to complete this section with the broadcasting archive of RFE, managed by the Hoover Institution.

The critical approach proposed in this thesis and based on ethnographical reading of archives, memoirs, and oral history interviews shows the entanglement between actors and the influences of this entanglement over time. The propaganda discourses of the 1950s influenced not only the way in which the movement was perceived during communism, but also the way people remember the partisans. The memory of the Făgăraș Group follows and mirrors the inconsistencies and gaps of the archival systems of the Cold War. The two versions of the Făgăraș Group's history proposed by the Securitate, on the one hand, and RFE, on the other hand, engendered a split memory: the partisans are either black or white. Interviews with family members and descendants of the partisans reveal an unexplored realm: the *postmemory* of armed resistance. On this ground, a new image of resistance and a new discourse about the Făgăraș Group are being shaped. Interestingly enough, participants in the movement refute both discourses which are labeling them as criminals or heroes, but also the status of victims. They propose a more balanced and nuanced account, even though maybe less appealing in the eyes of those searching for spectacular deeds.

Finally, the process of *postmemory*—the trauma transmitted to the second and third generation of the persecuted—opens the space for exploring the legacy of the political repression within the contemporary Romanian society. Coming to terms with the past is a struggle not only for people who had traumatic experiences during communism, but also for their offspring – that is, for the members of the contemporary Romanian society. During oral history interviews, the historian becomes a witness and to some extend a participant in their healing process and gives them the opportunity to word their past experiences and come to a closure. It is a challenging position that comes with a lot of responsibility. Overall, in a microhistory framework, the study of the Făgăraș Group proves the importance of revisiting sources in a comparative and critical manner, while giving voice to all actors involved in a phenomenon.

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