

## METHODS USED BY THE SECURITATE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS BETWEEN 1948 AND 1958

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Opposition against the Romanian communist regime manifests itself in the most varied forms, involving all social classes, from intellectuals faithful to democratic principles to the soldiers animated by a strong patriotic feeling, to the country men so fond of their land, work and religion. Among all the ways the Romanian used in order to fight against the communist system, the most tough and tragic one is the armed opposition.

The Soviet army's penetration in Romania, the settlement of the pro-communist government lead by Dr. Petru Groza in 1945, the obvious falsification of the election's results in 1946, which marks the "recognition" of the communists as state leaders, as well as the so-called measures for the state democratization materialized by the traditional political parties dissolution between 1947 and 1948, the king's castaway from the country, the decisions taken against the Iron Guards by enforcing the Order no. 5 of the Ministry of Defence and Internal Affairs' Office from May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1948, the resolution of the Romanian Communist Party Central Committee's Plenary Meeting regarding the socialism spreading in the countryside, all these accompanied by an intense oppression, make the ones aimed at by the Government organize into opposition groups. Furthermore, the Romanian Iron Guard leaders decide to send to the mountains some of the members followed by the Securitate in order to organize, as far as possible, opposition groups, creating shelters for them, arms, munitions and food warehouses, connection systems, as well as channels to cross the border of the country.<sup>1</sup>

The oppression the communists unleash after March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945 against their political opponents, as well as the financial problems generate a climate of general uncertainty and discontent, many population categories being deeply discontent because of the new form of government, while the number of the opponents is rising.

A strong motivation in taking the decision to hide in the mountains and to take part in the armed opposition groups is based on the hope that Occidental Europe and USA would not abandon Central and East Europe to the Soviets, while a war against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) is considered as inevitable.

<sup>1</sup> S.R.I., *Cartea Albă a Securității, 1948-1958*, book II, Bucharest, 1995, p. 77.

The myth of the American arrival is created and nourished both by the representatives of the dissolved political parties, who, in the context of the tensions between the former allies, in the context of the outburst of the cold war and of the Korean conflict, believe that the occurrence of a conflagration between the democratic states and the USSR is inevitable, as well as by all the attitudes of the American authorities manifested related to the events in Romania, the food aids sent by the U.S.A. to the starving Moldova, and to the anti-communist press campaign constantly promoted by the radio channels "Free Europe" and "American Voice", all of them creating the impression that a lot of attention is paid to our country. Beside the previously mentioned aspects, at the beginning of the year 1949, the P.C.O. (Political Coordination Office) begins to recruit Romanians from the refugee camps in the southern part of Germany, Austria and Yugoslavia, whom they train and prepare to contact the opposition groups and provide them with light arms, munitions, radio emitters and medicines. Their mission is to support partisans in sabotaging the railways and factories, spy troop movements, which could indicate that an attack is prepared against Yugoslavia and the Western Europe, and, in a case a war bursts out, it may make fighters harass the Soviet troops.

A very interesting fact is that this foreign interference myth is strongly supported precisely by the agitation mechanism of the party. This apparatus has never stopped suggesting to the collective mental that the "enemies of the people" inside the country collaborate with the "western imperialists" in order for a new war to outburst and remove "people's democracy".

Opposition groups try to organize themselves so that, should an international conflict outbursts between the U.S.S.R. and the western countries, they may act and take control over the area where they develop their activity, eventually aiming fight and overturn the communist regime. Although, between 1945-1946, there is an attempt to unify the opposition coming from an organization known as the "National Resistance Movement", this is never achieved. Despite the numerous initiatives of fighting communism in Romania, they remain isolated, as the groups spread over the mountain or forest areas of the country have no connection among them. There are several former active servicemen, such as colonel Ion Uță in Banat and major Nicolae Dabija in the Apuseni Mountains, who disconnectedly try, at the end of the '40s, to launch the insurrection, aiming to extend it at the regional and then national level, but, eventually, every group ends up in fighting for their own survival.

Due to the lack of a leading nucleus at the national level, partisans cannot take control of an important geographic area, where the authority of the communist regime may be restricted or interrupted. Beside the intimidation of the R.C.P. members or of those involved in order or administration bodies, beside several anti-soviet and anti-communist instigations, the means to impose control are reduced. Moreover, the lack of a leading nucleus allows the Securitate and its regulated troops to achieve a concentration of their forces in order to destroy each

and single group, which is otherwise excluded, when a unique headquarters would force repressive bodies to disperse their means over areas exceeding their powers. Thus, as they face rather dense forces, resistance members have to split in small groups or abandon their actions in order to survive.

The width of the resistance movement is proven by the figures provided by the Securitate; in 1949, 200 subversive groups are already identified, as well as 33 "terrorist groups"; between 1945 and 1959, their reach the number 1196<sup>2</sup>. According to a synthesis elaborated by the Securitate in May 1959, the elimination of this form of resistance ends up in 13297<sup>3</sup> people sentenced to prison and 463 people sentenced to forced residence. More than 5000 of them have been members of "legionary organizations and groups"<sup>4</sup>. No one knows the exact number of those killed in military actions or in post-apprehension investigations.

A report made a month later, on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1959, regarding the "situation of counter-revolutionary elements in Romania, imprisoned to execute their sentence or in full development of the Securitate investigations", mentions 12,073 people imprisoned for participation or activity in various organizations and "terrorist groups". According to this report, 5,000 of these people have been involved in "legionary organizations and groups"<sup>5</sup>. Examples are given too, but a significant part of the mentioned groups have not been initiated or led by the legionaries, such as "Vlad Țepeș II", "Avram Iancu's Outlaws", "White Guard", Mircea Vlădescu, Dumitru Ișfănut and others, who have mainly a National Peasants Party component, although some of them have legionary members too.

There have never been a significant number of partisans within the anti-communist organizations, the actual number varying from 2–3 people to several dozens. According to a document issued by the repressive bodies on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1950, referring to the "situation of the groups" existing at that moment, one may notice that the number of partisans acting in the outreach of several Securitate regional offices varies between 2 and 21 people<sup>6</sup>.

As the number of anti-communist fighters grows, new organization forms and techniques are adopted, shelters and hideaways are arranged, information

<sup>2</sup> Idem, book III, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> The big number of arrested people should not make us believe that they would all fight with guns in their hands, since a significant part of them merely support resistance members. The operations against Spiru Blănaru and Ionescu Gheorghe groups lead to the catch of 14 partisans, 7 people are shot during the fights and 120 hosts and accomplices of the fighters in the mountains are arrested. C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți, eroi. Grupurile de rezistență și Securitatea (1948–1968)*. Documents selected by Florica Dobre (coordinator), Florian Banu, Camelia Ivan Duică, Silviu B. Moldovan, Elis Neagoe, Liviu Țăranu, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 2003, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> S.R.I., *Cartea Albă a Securității, 1958–1968*, book III, Bucharest, 1995, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Archives of the Romanian Information Service (ASRI), Documentary fund, file 7778, f. 165–166.

<sup>6</sup> The Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Secret Service Archives (ACNSAS), Documentary fund, file 36, f. 387–389.

collection and verification means are improved, as well as the approaching methods of supporting people. The organization measures taken by the resistance leaders mainly aim to reach the safety degree of their organizations during attacks, transfers, or at the entry or exits in and out of places. In case of confrontations, the goal is for the members of the groups to be able to hide and retreat quite easily, and have the possibility of evacuating the injured. The military equipment<sup>7</sup>, usually consisting in light guns and grenades, as well as the generally small number of members within these nuclei, leads to the establishment of a typology of their actions. Most of them were actions of sabotage-diversion<sup>8</sup> and of intimidation-terrorisation mainly directed at the local representatives of the party<sup>9</sup> and of the state, as well as of their collaborators.

Some groups make lists with all the active communists in the area “in order to perform actions of terror against them, and, after the envisaged change, to render them to authorities for punishment of their activity within the current regime”.<sup>10</sup> The lack of appropriate ammunition and the insufficient food are completed by a good knowledge of the area, courage and the war experience, as many of the resistance captains are veterans from the Eastern and Western campaigns, who know how to organize their actions, plan their travels and maintain discipline within their groups.

At first, the resistance movement enjoys the support of the population, many followers coming from them, organized based on family, political or sympathy criteria, or, in some cases, due to certain constraints.

Partisans recruit connection and support people, as well as hosts, focusing on opponents of the regime, but without open manifestations, on those who have their homes in favourable topographic locations and a small number of family members, or on those who have contact with many individuals by means of their profession.

Since it is known for a fact that repressive authorities arrest those whom they suppose to have connections with the runaways, resistance members, in their

<sup>7</sup> C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> Here is a fragment from a report on the result of the resistance research drafted on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1949, including a presentation of sabotage-diversion actions: “On March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1949, Gheorghiu Gheorghe, together with Forțu Gavrilă, Torcea Ion and Pițuru Nicolae return to the mountains, waiting for other elements too. They build themselves a hut in Dealul Rusului and decide to act, as they are to attack Poeni factory, the railways...”. *Ibidem*, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> A report made by the Inspection Service within the Ministry of Administration and the Interior, on the results achieved between 1956–1957 against the partisans, includes references to the actions of anti-communist fighters against government representatives: “Bandits Șerban and Voican commit aggressions against a police officer, whom they deprive of his self-loading gun, against the said Andreescu, who develops collectivization activities, against the secretary of “June 11<sup>th</sup>” cooperative, whose bag they steel with 11,00 lei in it, they prepare an attack against Radu Valentin, the Secret Service captain, whom they intended to investigate”. *Ibidem*, p. 268.

<sup>10</sup> ACNSAS, Penal fund, file 84, vol. I, f. 18.

contacts with the support people, train them not to talk about their relation with them in case of any subsequent investigations, and, after the investigation comes to an end, they are asked to come and inform them about the questions they have been asked and on what the Securitate know about some group or the other. By means of this type of information, partisans' leaders modify the tactic of their actions in many cases, they take new safety measures, sometimes even changing their area of activity, or interrupting their activities for long period of time, and, in some cases, they even succeed in achieving an efficient misleading of the Securitate authorities. Leon Şuşman is an exemplary case, who is caught as late as in 1957, and who, by means of one of his people, Vasile Răfăilă, who has been recruited by the Securitate as an agent, manages to receive important information about the information that the Securitate has on him, and, at the same time, to achieve their efficient intoxication.<sup>11</sup>

Ever since its establishment in August 1948, the attributions of the General Direction for the Security of the People included the repression of the armed resistance movements, this task being given to Direction I – Internal Information, as well as to the specialized services within the 12 regional directions. As the Securitate is reorganized based on the Decree no. 50 from March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1951, the elimination mission of the mountains groups is given to Direction C – Counter-sabotage. Following the reorganizations from 1952–1953, this objective becomes the task of Direction III, under the name of “Fighting against subversive political activity”. Within this direction, Service V “fights against terrorist elements, monitors runaways and those organized in gangs, and ends the activity performed by former unblocked officers and by former clerks of the repressive authorities”.<sup>12</sup>

Repeated failures in capturing certain groups makes the managing team of the Securitate establish single headquarters, which are supposed to coordinate capturing and elimination activities throughout a particular geographic area. Documents drafted by the Securitate often mention the Gang Service, which shows the fact that the main activity of certain structures focused on internal information is related to the elimination of this form of resistance, and the periodical reports, syntheses and descriptions of the performed activities show the overwhelming inequality of the confronting forces.

In their fight against partisans, the Securitate benefit from impressive funds, but also from the contribution of the Soviet counsellors, who introduce organizational measures, as well as working methods inspired by the years of the U.S.S.R. civil war. Moreover, the communist party, which get to run the country by means of a clandestine and conspiring movement, know what methods to use in order to eliminate such organizations.

<sup>11</sup> C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 262.

<sup>12</sup> Archives of the Internal Affairs (A.M.I.), Management and Human Resources fund (D.M.R.U.), inventory no. 7364, file 10, f. 192.

One of the first operations performed against armed groups and runaways is the *collection of information* about them in every region they perform their activity. The existing syntheses and reports on this issue, which are then discussed in analysis meetings at the managing level of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, are quite abundant in information, from the most insignificant pieces (such as the presence of some unidentified individuals in an area) and to the most complex and exact information, collected by means of the local Militia authorities or of party leaders in communes (such as personal data, biographies before August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1944, the reasons that have led to their involvement in the resistance movement, the human and technical potential of the group). The possibility of intercepting the groups is postponed in a first stage, the Securitate investigating people in areas where resistance members develop their activity in order to identify their supporters, hosts or connection people, as well as the way that groups could be penetrated from an informational perspective. The essential element in the elimination of the armed resistance by the Securitate is represented by a larger and improved information network in the area where partisans develop their activity, the preoccupations related to its improvement and extension occurring as a leitmotif in the documents elaborated by the repression authorities at that time.<sup>13</sup>

The elaboration of the information network implies the identification, in monitored areas, of people who are willing to collaborate with the Securitate, and who also have the necessary means to collect information. Since the new officers of the apparatus have serious flaws in their professional training, the D.G.S.P. management maintains a part of the specialists from the former Special Information and Security Service, whose knowledge they could not dispense from. They elaborate guidelines related to the necessary qualities and means to recruit a good informer. According to these guidelines, a good informer has to comply with several conditions: to belong to the monitored objective, and to be an element with contact and movement opportunities as complex as possible, perspicacious, earnest, and, most of all, of good faith, to be well oriented about his mission, discrete, and conspiring.<sup>14</sup> They also mention supplementary elements, which could help officers choose the persons that are to be attracted to collaboration: "These individuals are preferably recruited among people with professions or occupation appropriate for travelling, such as doctors, medical agents, notaries or priests. They are to be recruited from the external state apparatus, merely considering the purpose they are

<sup>13</sup> "In regions with (resistance) signals, they systematically begin to identify the individuals forming the groups, also considering their relatives, closest friends, etc., of whom they create an information network in the villages at the bottom of the mountains. Certainly, group members need supplies, which are provided precisely in the above-mentioned villages." ACNSAS, Documentary fund, file 50, book I, f. 493–495.

<sup>14</sup> Central History National Archives (ANIC), Police General Direction fund (D.G.P.), file 87/1947, f. 64.

recruited for. It is not recommendable to recruit people among democratic political militants, but, on the contrary, reactionary elements are preferred.”<sup>15</sup>

Since the actual recruiting operation is regarded as a delicate and tactful one, directives recommend the following means: conviction (at people with character), stimulation of a weakness and provision of material opportunities to fulfil it, running into debt by various services asking them to work in exchange, intimidation, using the available information on some guilt that could occur on the target person, blackmail when compromising data are available.<sup>16</sup>

Although recruiting the members of the information network is considered as a crucial and very difficult to achieve goal, the amateurism and bad breaks of Securitate officers deeply diminished its efficiency. Numerous informers are revealed because of the vicious methods they use to organize their meetings. In a note of the Group Service from March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1953, referring to the deficiencies noticed in Securitate areas from Pitești, Ploiești and Cluj, they underline the following: “Meetings were also held at Militia headquarters, people’s councils, as well as other visible locations, which could not provide informers with complete conspiracy.”<sup>17</sup> Moreover, there are cases when “the agent goes to attend a meeting wearing the uniform”, as mentioned in another document written by the Securitate on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1953.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the connection with informers is not a rhythmical one, and discussions are held during meetings without a well-defined plan, and full of threats, curses, or even beating.

A relevant case for the way Securitate officers understand to recruit their informers, in order to obtain information about partisans, is the case of major Alimănescu, special envoy of the “center” in the commune of Nucșoara to capture Armăuțoiu group. The major seizes and tortures all the relatives and friends of the group members: “... they were pulled to the beam by a rope, hands tied on their back, and then sent to catch the bandits in the mountains... They seized the daughter of runaway Titu Jubleanu, 17 years of age, who was beaten, and even burnt on the lower part of her body, so that the child had to say various lies, that she subsequently retracted, saying it was not true, that she had said lies because she was afraid.”<sup>19</sup>

The difficulties that officers face in creating their networks prove that most of the population support resistance groups.<sup>20</sup> However, informers do exist, recruited by terror or physical constraint<sup>21</sup>, cases such as the above-mentioned ones being

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>17</sup> C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 187.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 186.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> In a report from July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1953, an informer talks about the discussion he had with a shepherd from a sheep cot in Boarcășului Mountain: “I meet the partisans in the mountains almost every day, but, when the army come, I don’t tell them anything”. *Ibidem*, p. 193.

<sup>21</sup> Even Gheorghe Pintilie feels the need to temper the zeal of some officers. As he refers to their attitude towards informers, he says: “... We must take care of them, give them instructions, show

very frequent. They would often speculate extreme poverty of some individuals in choosing an informer<sup>22</sup>, exploit personal resentments, abuse the political convictions of some followers of the new regime, or take advantage of the fact that many people are liable to imprisonment themselves.

The Securitate Agency in the area where resistance members act consists especially in shepherds, forest exploitation workers, foresters, lodge keepers, monks and priests in monasteries, as well as women in villages at the bottom of the mountains. Due to the fact that recruiting is often made by physical constraint or following their kidnapping from their origin places and transported to the headquarters of the repressive apparatus<sup>23</sup>, informers' loyalty and sincerity do not reach significant levels. They usually play double, providing resistance organizations with real information about the Securitate actions and the data available to them, as well as false or old news about the resistance movement, Securitate officers. In order to avoid the repression agents' brutality, they would make up some information and be silent about other accurate information, if they think the latter is not too pleasant for them. The violent treatment applied to informers is so extreme that, sometimes, they prefer to go to the mountains themselves<sup>24</sup>, sometimes escaping in a raking action where they are used as guides.<sup>25</sup> Caught between loyalty to or fear of the resistance group members and the pressure exercised by the Securitate, some informers try to commit suicide.<sup>26</sup> Others choose to unmask themselves in order to escape.

Informers' training or guiding is often rather superficial, so that, despite all the drama of those times, hilarious situations are quite often. For instance, a recently recruited forest worker, once he gets to work, gets drunk and asks his mates to tell him everything they know about the "gangs", as he is a man of the

them the policy that the party embraces, not just grasp them and beat them up. If a carpenter damages his lathe, what is he eating the next day? Is this how our party teaches us?". Apud. Dennis Deletant, *Teroarea comunistă în România. Gheorghiu-Dej și statul polițienesc (1948–1965)*, Editura Polirom, Iasi, 2001, p. 324.

<sup>22</sup> A report of the secret service department from Câmpulung, dated March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1957, refers to this aspect: "We hereby report that the above-mentioned teams have accepted to control and verify the monitored activity sectors twice or three time a month, only in exchange of bread and some food, since their families are poor and cannot provide form themselves". C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 123.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 297–298.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 230.

<sup>25</sup> A document from March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1950 evokes such a situation: "As they approach the mountain, they notice that the informer is uncertain, as he would always linger on the way when approaching one of the points he has mentioned... Suddenly the informer throws himself in a chasm, down in the mountains. A posse is organized, but he has never been found". *Ibidem*, p. 90.

<sup>26</sup> This is the case of the shepherd Rotaru Ion from the commune of Pietroșani-Muscel, who split off his stomach with a knife on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1949, because of the pressures made by the Secret Service officers to be guided towards the Arnăuțoiu group. Archives of the Ministry of Justice (A.M.J.), Military Court Direction (D.I.M.), Penal fund, file 27.463, book 4, f. 39.

Securitate, while a doctor, who works as an agent of the repressive bodies and who has been sent in the commune of Corbi to contact captain Ilie Popescu, once he reaches his destination, he stops at every gate and asks people where he may find him, as he wants to have a word with him.<sup>27</sup> The reports of the Gangs Service usually include numerous problems in the use of the agency, mainly focusing on the fact that operative actions performed on big areas, with impressive forces, are based only on signals and clues, instead of using the data provided by the informers, and therefore capturing attempts remain unaccomplished. The informers' attracting process towards collaboration registers numerous failures when it comes to partisans. One of the reasons is the Securitate's attempt to force the relatives of the mountain runaways to turn them in to the repression authorities. The result is not the expected one, as relatives seldom inform the resistance members about their hunting and agree upon the information that has to be provided, misleading the operative groups.

Due to a lack of results, the Securitate management takes measures for agent recruiting to be made according to a concrete plan, so they may have real data collecting opportunities, while excluding inappropriate informers from the network and arresting the double ones.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, personal files of the supporting elements, as well as of the resistance members' close relatives also have to be submitted, even if these measures resembled the ones taken by an occupation army.

In a report that captain N. Popescu elaborates on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1950, referring to the measures that have to be taken for the identification of the Arsenescu group, they require the following: "Measures must be taken for the dislocation of the bandits' families and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree relatives, which includes parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews and godchildren, in order to cut all means for the bandits' supply or shelter and to make those who have remained in villages, who had or still have connections with the bandits, not to help them anymore and surrender them to the authorities".<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, they suggest to attract for collaboration those friends or relatives that could not be dislocated, in order to intercept any occurrence of the partisans.

Gradually, the information network begins to have results; although, in the beginning, "many agents prove to be insincere or traitors", and "the received information are not judiciously exploited", it generates the wear of the groups by depriving them of information and food, time being an advantage for the waiting party.

<sup>27</sup> M. Oprea, *Banalitatea râului. O istorie a Securității în documente, 1949–1989*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2002, p. 269.

<sup>28</sup> When the collectivity has suspicions regarding some informers, D.G.S.P. uses various methods to disperse these suspicions. They would break into their houses, into their relatives' houses; they would simulate their arrest at the headquarters of the repressive authorities, which is performed on daytime and with as many witnesses as possible. See C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 214.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97.

Despite the unprofessional manner of working with the organization, and the fact that the population sides with the resistant members, we must underline that, most of the times, fighters' capturing or elimination are based on the data that informers provided to the Securitate officers. As far as people's support is concerned, which obviously exists, let us not exaggerate about it, Ion Gavrilă's statement on this matter are extremely suggestive: "When I was heading to the mountains, I knew plenty of things about that hidden part of the Romanian history. We never laboured under a delusion. We did not count on their joining us or that we would be understood by everyone in Făgăraş Land. When o said that, in 1949–1950, people from the mountain villages had risen or that we were welcome and helped by people from that region, I never referred to, who knows, some crowds of people. (...) Let us say a hundred, two hundred, maybe a thousand? But the rest of the people? Some of them did not come because they were scared. They must be understood too. Others merely care about their personal interest. Every step they make in life observes some sort of a calculation. Regimes change, profiteers remain (...). Then there is the great mass of the toilsome, whose life reduces to labour and food in an eternal cycle, and whose knowledge does not go higher than the food plate under their nose (...). Rulers do with them whatever they want. First of all, they think instead of them."<sup>30</sup>

At a first glance, in the Securitate documents, the numerous commitments and the names of various persons who make these commitments may be unpleasantly surprising, but the participants in the resistance movement are more understanding to the information providers, since they know how people are forced to cooperate with the repressive authorities. Here is Ion Gavrilă's statement in an interview made by Iuliu Crăcană: "There are several types of informers. I have never agreed with Ticu Dumitrescu and other people who wanted to publish an informers' list; it would have been the biggest mistake we could have made. It does not matter that someone provided information to the Securitate. At that time, there was no one, except very few exceptions, who could refuse, who dared refuse to collaborate with the Securitate; because, if you did not accept to provide information about or monitor someone, things would not go very well for you. I ran into two cases: a hunting guard said: I have been hired to protect the prey, not to betray people; as a consequence, he was arrested and taken away. An old vicarress, the wife of a military priest, said: I could never be able to betray Gavrilă and Metea, whom I know since they were children, and whom I love as if they were my own sons."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ion Gavrilă-Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc*, vol. I, Editura Marineasa, Timișoara, 2001, p. 267–268.

<sup>31</sup> Iuliu Crăcană, *În munți cu arma în mână. Dialog cu Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu*, in C.N.S.A.S., *Arhivele Securității*, Editura Nemira, Bucharest, 2004, p. 517.

The destruction of the groups implies the infiltration of informers<sup>32</sup> or undercover officers<sup>33</sup>, who introduce themselves as runaways followed by the Securitate. The affiliation attempt to resistance groups by people working for the Securitate is fulfilled by means of the shepherds, who would bring supplies to the resistance members, and who inform them about the existence of people hiding from the repressive authorities. A synthesis from 1949 describes this method: "... Undercover secret service agents develop awareness activities in the region, their main mission being to contact terrorist groups, pretending to be runaways; therefore, they first of all contact the shepherds providing the supplies, by means of whom they try to enter the groups."<sup>34</sup>

A penetrating action takes place in September 1951, by sending to the region of Arges and Fagaras mountains the "Mandea" diversion group, which is supposed to contact the Arnăuțoiu brothers, but eventually provides connection to five members of the group led by Ion Gavrilă. Due to a lack of tact, they are unmasked, and three of the members are executed<sup>35</sup> by Gavrilă's partisans. These groups would take measures to prevent informers' or secret service agents' infiltration among them. Even if the candidate is known by the captain or by the other members of the group, he is carefully checked or even forced to act as a "justice maker" (in order to be accepted among partisans, Gheorghe Balica had to kill one of the group hostages, who had been sentenced to death).<sup>36</sup>

There are also successful infiltration actions. Thus, an agent manages to enter the Arsenescu-Arnăuțoiu group, being guided to organize the resistance members' move on a route that has been previously established with the repressive authorities. Claiming to go to a forest exploitation for food supplies, the informer manages to convince the resistance members to leave unarmed and on daylight, arguing that they would otherwise generate suspicions. The Securitate creates a trap and manages to catch several partisans. Apparently, the agent escapes, as he is actually ordered to continue his mission among those who have not been arrested. He is unmasked on account of the unprofessional connections that the Securitate has with him, and he is shot by a member of the group.<sup>37</sup>

Repressive agents are also guided to people who support the resistance movement. As they are introduced to the aimed objectives, a "legend" is created, actually a fabricated biography, which the informer has to assimilate completely.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 159.

<sup>33</sup> See S.R.I. *Cartea Albă...*, book II, p. 567-569.

<sup>34</sup> C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 77.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 131.

<sup>36</sup> *Rezistența în Munții Semenic*, a documentary made by Rodica Palade in "22", 3<sup>rd</sup> year, no. 16(117), from April 24 -30, 1992.

<sup>37</sup> C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 313-314.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem...*, p. 289-290.

Undercover secret service workers are sent to the areas where resistance groups have their supplying points, where they are to spend a longer period of time as tourists, sport fishermen, weathermen, warehousemen, storekeepers at the supplying points. The extermination of Leon Şuşman group implies the successful use of such an undercover mission. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1957, in the commune of Poşaga, Turda District, a team of 10 secret service officers “labelled” as “geologists” are sent, in a first stage, to collect information, and maintain in the field, without unmasking themselves, for about two months. The group led by Vieru Constantin, who is introduced to the local peoples as “teacher Constantinescu”, manages to surround and catch the members of the Şuşman group<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, in places where resistance members could come for supplies, such as huts, sheep yards or I.F.E.T. warehouses, the staff is replaced by militia agents or soldiers from the Securitate Troops, who have been ordered to seize resistance members.

The Securitate also gets information after the seizure and then the investigation of the resistance members. Their inquiry has to be performed so that they may identify their accomplices, “the instigators and the supporters”. They are also interested to find out where they have their guns from, and where they keep them, who support them, whether there are connections established among different partisan groups, as well as between these groups and the former political parties, priests, Romanians immigrants, and whether the resistance members are involved in riots or in any other attitudes that are hostile to the communists in the rural environment.<sup>40</sup> The documents issued by the repressive authorities confirm the fact that the information obtained during the investigation by the torture of the arrested person leads to other seizures, but also to the modification of the Securitate tactics.

There are cases when they try to hide the fact that some partisans have been caught, so that the received information may lead to the seizure of other members of the group.<sup>41</sup>

Another method used by the Securitate is the vilification of the group members in the mountains among the population and their supporters in order to reduce

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 254–257.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, *passim*.

<sup>41</sup> In a note written on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1968, by the Secret Service Inspectorate from Botoşani, referring to the contribution of certain officers to the actions performed against the resistance members, there are mentions about these tactics: “...aiming to cover his capture, major Munteanu inquires the host about the runaway’s presence (as she was in the garden at the moment when her property was broken into, and did not manage to see that he got caught), searched through the neighbours, including his collaborators, waiting for the evening to come so that he could transfer him to the district in a conspiring manner. He took these measures because they knew he had relations with the bandit Vatamaniuc Gavril, and could provide us with information about the latter’s hiding place. He was transferred to the district in the evening, and then investigated, saying that he had parted from Vatamaniuc the day before, indicating the house that he could be found into and the fact that there was a hiding ellar there.” *Ibidem*, p. 349–350.

partisans' means of information and supply. These tactics are also used in the case of Ion Gavrilă, who manages to escape all the traps and the actions developed against the group that he leads.<sup>42</sup> Once his former mates have been caught, they are forced to write a "will" letter to their closest relatives, letting them know that they have been arrested as a consequence of Gavrilă's betrayal, the man who still enjoys freedom. The letters sent from prison, by the so-called understanding of a guard, to the families of the sentenced people, aim to compromise Ion Gavrilă and make them cooperate with the Securitate for his seizure.<sup>43</sup>

The same direction of the resistance vilification in people's eyes includes the measure taken by the Securitate in order to force shepherds, lodge keepers and forest workers to pay for the food and various materials taken by the fighters in the mountains to survive.<sup>44</sup> As a countermeasure, the members of the Arsenescu group reassure the shepherds in the sheep yards they take their food from that an American plane has parachuted a package with 250,000 de lei for them and, once they find it, they will pay their cheese in exchange of 100 lei /kg, the special purpose of this money being the payment of food.<sup>45</sup>

The installation of the operative technique (O.T.) in the houses of the relatives or of the supporters of those who fight in the mountains is used on a relatively small scale, due to both the technical imperfections of the period and the fixing difficulties of the listening posts. Nevertheless, there are cases when, by means of this technique, useful information is obtained about the resistance activity. By the installation of technical equipments, at the end of 1957, in the house of Ana Lungu from the village of Hodiș, information are obtained about Șuşman Teodor and Șuşman Avisalon, who have been tracked for a long time, and killed on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1958 by setting the barn they are hidden in on fire.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> The tracing file of Ion Gavrilă includes more than 50.000 sheets, since this partisan represents a real nightmare for the secret service officers. Repressive authorities lose his track in 1958, when a plan is elaborated to compromise him. He is looked for everywhere in Ardealul, his features being periodically transmitted to the border, forest and construction enterprises, to I.A.S., and C.A.P.. Sheep yards and monasteries are carefully verified. Since research did not generate results, officers began to go to sheep yards and take pictures of shepherds in order to compare their pictures to Gavrilă's last picture, which was approximately 30 years old. All the bodies of the imprudent tourists from Făgăraș were verified by the Secret Service so they did not match the features of the runaway. Iuliu Crăcană, *Rezistența armată anticomunistă din Munții Făgăraș între anii 1948 și 1955. Grupul Gavrilă*. In the book edited by C.N.S.A.S. (coordinator Gh. Onișoru) *Mișcarea armată de rezistență anticomunistă din România (1944–1962)*, Editura Kullusys, Bucharest, 2003, p. 38. Ion Gavrilă was caught in 1976, being investigated without any violences. The death sentence had been prescribed.

<sup>43</sup> See *Extras din planul de măsuri întocmite de M.A.I. Direcția Regională Stalin pentru urmărirea pe țară a lui Gavrilă Ion*, made on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1958. C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 282–283.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 196.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 193.

<sup>46</sup> Clara Cosmineanu, *Eroi fără glorie, eroii anonimi. Grupul Teodor Șuşman (1948–1958)*, in *Mișcarea armată...*, p. 96.

The operative technique is also used in the elimination of the Arnăuțoiu group, which develop their activity in Câmpulung-Curtea de Argeș area. Tracked ever since 1949, this group continues to cause problems for the Securitate by the middle of the '50s too. Therefore, in 1956, they decide to install listening means at the residence of the runaway Marinescu Ion's mother, who has recently been released from prison.<sup>47</sup> The same thing happens in the house of Toma and Petre Arnăuțoiu's parents, although this is not a decisive contribution to the fall of the group.<sup>48</sup> However, the officers still have the opportunity to clarify certain aspects regarding the activity of the resistance members. In the case of the house of Toma and Petre Arnăuțoiu's parents, they no longer use the operative technique because Iancu Arnăuțoiu accidentally discovers it. The O.T. means are also used in the house of Ion Gavrilă's mother, listening the family's everyday talks being the main concern of several secret service officers.

The main method to catch or destroy the "armed counter-revolutionary gangs" is the massive use of the Securitate Troops, several hundreds of people against groups of five-six, rarely more than 10 people, who would often manage to escape. The following troops are gathered in November 1953 against the group led by Ion Gavrilă, estimated to include 12–13 people: Stalin City Secret Service Regiment (reinforced by another platoon on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1953), Drăgășani Secret Service Regiment (plus a riflemen company guided to Bahna Rusului on November 4<sup>th</sup> 1953), Turnu-Măgurele Secret Service Company, Orăștie Secret Service Regiment, Florești, Tecuci, Oradea Secret Service Regiments, the secret service staff of Stalin MAI Regional Department, as well as 50 service dogs.<sup>49</sup>

The enormous disproportion of forces, with all the ridicule of this situation, also noticed by some of the officers, generates the registration of several achievements by the seizure of resistance members. This is the result of several on-field operations, such as raking, blocking certain areas, organization of ambushes and traps, as well as the direct attack on shelters identified by means of the information network.

No method is too much for the Securitate to use against the resistance members in order to accomplish their goals. A member of Gavrilă group, Toma Pârău, is surrounded by the repressive agents when he is in the attic of his uncle's house, Dumitru Cornea from Ileni-Făgăraș. Being challenged to surrender, he refuses to do this and persistently protects himself, managing to mortally shoot a master sergeant and a militia lieutenant. He kills himself with the last bullets under his mother's eyes, brought by the Securitate to be used as a human shield.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p. 285.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 286.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 204–205.

<sup>50</sup> ACNSAS, Information fund, file 770, book I, f. 27.

They also prefer the massive use of the Securitate Troops in the actions for the seizure and execution of the fighters in the mountains because the exposure degree of their officers is thus significantly diminished. The biggest number of victims in these fights occurs among soldiers and inferior orders, who are pushed forward. The insufficient physical and military training of the secret service agents generate a lack of courage during their actions against people who have the advantage of knowing the place and having organized the front.

The Securitate Troops, which are dislocated in a particular area, are usually operatively subordinated to the officers from the regional departments where they develop their activity. The difficulties that the Troops face in cooperating with these officers are also emphasized by the fact that, many times, the captains of the units involved in an action do not have the freedom to elaborate their own action plans, but had the obligation to mechanically apply strategies elaborated by the Operative Troops Direction. Moreover, there are men "from the center" who have to monitor the observance of the orders passed by the Operative Troops Direction. For example, for a raking action organized in the western part of Cluj, which involves 300 people, the plan is made for six days. Three days later, the traced people are seen outside the perimeter, but the dispositions are not changed because the initial strategy planned six raking days.<sup>51</sup>

For a better understanding of the complex actions developed by the Securitate against the fighters in the mountains, we hereby present the measures taken by the repressive agents on January 19<sup>th</sup> 1949, after the resistance members' attack on Teregova gendarme unit. Two secret service regiments have been sent to the region, equipped with guns, company phones, rockets, and radios. A unique commandment is to be settled in this region, which could coordinate the entire action. A vast information network is created and an intense tracing action is performed. The investigation of the seized people is not made on the spot, but at the county headquarters of the secret service. Resistance members have to be caught alive, so that their trial may be set as an example. All the villages in the commune, as well as the neighbouring ones are checked, house after house, and the unblocked officers, filtered lawyers, landlords, and the country gentlemen who are thought to be suspects, as well as anyone who has ever had connections to the legionary movement and the Peasants National Party are to be seized. Traffic is completely forbidden at night. All the members of the families of those who have been identified to have been involved in the attack are to be dislocated and sent to Dobrogea, while the entire human inventory has to be handed over. Their houses are given away to be used by various state institutions, which do not have appropriate locations.<sup>52</sup> The above-mentioned example is not a single one, merely a probative one for the actions of the state repressive authorities, just like an occupation army.

<sup>51</sup> Marius Oprea, *Banalitatea răului...*, p. 271.

<sup>52</sup> C.N.S.A.S., *Bande, bandiți...*, p.52-53.

After 1958, the Securitate Troops are sporadically used in actions against partisans, because the resistance in the mountains, with very few exceptions, has been eliminated. The last annihilated fighter is peasant Ion Bantea, from Rusea-Banat, who is killed in 1962.

By their action against communism, the Romanian resistance members have endangered their lives and their freedom, some of them being killed or wounded during the fights, others being seized, investigated and judged, together with their supporters, by the military courts from Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Galați or Timișoara. Some of them have received death sentences; others are summarily executed, violating even the sentences passed by the courts of the time. Those who remain alive populate the Romanian Gulag, their families being persecuted, deported to Bărăgan or Dobrogea. The anti-communist armed resistance is a phenomenon that has not involved significant masses of people, and therefore has never had the chance of overturning the communist regime, which is supported by the presence of the Soviet troops in the country; although, in the first years, it has an important potential, it may be rendered productive only if connected to the foreign factor.

Nevertheless, there has been a motivation of this resistance to the communist regime; the hope of launching a movement for the freedom of the country once the inevitable conflict between the East and the West outbursts. The legendary "The Americans are coming" is crystallized around this obsessive idea. However, the signal is late, Tito's schism occurs, but the conflict does not boil over, so that people begin to think they have been the victims of a deal between the Americans and the Russians, a distribution of the influence areas, as the connoisseurs of the international political life would say, which becomes a fact at the outburst of the peoples' insurrection in Budapest in 1956, when the West abandons it to the Red Army. If the crush of the Hungarian revolution deprived the fighters in the mountains of their enthusiasm and the western intervention illusion, the retreat of the Soviet troops in 1958 provided them with a new motivation.