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Instrumentalizing the Nazi Past. The Securitate's Infiltration of the *Landsmannschaft* of the Transylvanian Saxons in the Federal Republic of Germany

Zusammenfassung: Als die Securitate 1948 gegründet wurde, übernahm sie umfangreiche Archivalien ihrer Vorgängerinstitution (Siguranța). Diese Bestände waren das Ergebnis einer intensiven Überwachung der deutschen Minderheitenelite in Rumänien, die sich insbesondere nach 1933 intensiviert hatte. Auf diese Weise konnte die nationalsozialistische Vergangenheit vieler Gemeindevorsteher im Detail rekonstruiert werden. Als das kommunistische Regime an die Macht kam, wurden diese Akten zu einem Instrument, um die deutsche Minderheit zu infiltrieren und Informationen über sie zu sammeln. In den 1960er Jahren – als die Auswanderung der Deutschen aus Rumänien zu einem Massenphänomen wurde – eröffneten sich der Securitate neue Wege. Sie weitete nun ihre Aufklärungsarbeit über die wichtigsten Institutionen der ethnischen Deutschen in Rumänien hinaus aus auf die Verbände der in die BRD ausgewanderten Deutschen, insbesondere die Landsmannschaften. Die vorliegende Studie fokussiert auf zwei Fälle, die den Prozess der Instrumentalisierung der NS-Vergangenheit durch die Securitate widerspiegeln.

Schlagwörter: Securitate; Akten der Geheimpolizei; Rumäniendeutsche; Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen; NS-Vergangenheit

Abstract: When the Securitate was created in 1948, the institution inherited large archival fonds created by its predecessor institution (Siguranța). These fonds were the result of an intense surveillance of the leadership of the German minority, something that increased especially after 1933. This allowed the Nazi past of several leaders and cultural personalities to be traced in detail. When the Communist regime seized power, these files became a tool in the hand of the Securitate in its endeavours to infiltrate and gather information about the German minority in the country. During the 1960s – when the emigration of Romanian Germans to the West became a mass phenomenon – new opportunities emerged. One of the most important areas of activity of the Securitate operations and infiltration was the *Landsmannschaften* of the Romanian Germans who emigrated to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). This paper will focus on two case studies reflecting the instrumentalization by the Securitate of the individual's Nazi past in order to develop the organization's surveillance activity on the main institutions of the German minority in Romania, as well as infiltrating the associations of Romanian Germans emigrated in the FRG.

Keywords: Securitate; Securitate files; Romanian Germans; *Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen*; Nazi past

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Introduction¹

When the Securitate² was established in 1948, the institution inherited large archival fonds created by its predecessor institution, the so-called Siguranța,³ which was active in Romania during the interwar and Second World War periods. These fonds contained the result of intense surveillance activity by the Siguranța on the elite of the German minority, something that increased especially after 1933 when the latter started to radicalize under the influence exerted by Nazi Germany. As a result, it was possible to trace the Nazi past of many leaders and cultural personalities of the community through the files created by the Siguranța. When the Communist regime seized power, these files became a tool in the hand of the Securitate's officers in their endeavours to infiltrate and collect information about the German minority in Romania. During the 1960s – when the emigration of Romanian Germans towards the West became a mass phenomenon – new opportunities emerged for the Securitate to enlarge its operations in Western Europe. Thus, the Securitate perceived the emigration process not only as a challenge but also as a significant source of opportunity. One of the most important areas of activity of the Securitate operations and infiltrations were the organizations called *Landsmannschaften* of the Romanian Germans emigrated in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

This paper will deal with how the Securitate instrumentalized the Nazi past of its targets among the German minority in Romania in order to collect information and keep both the key institutions of the community in Romania and the diaspora of the Romanian Germans in the West under surveillance. The first part of our article will focus on the practices of administering this problematic past and its main tool in this respect: the Securitate file. The second part will examine how the Securitate turned personal networks among the elite of the Romanian Germans into an effective base for collecting information about the German minority in Romania, but also about its diaspora in the West.

Belu Zilber (1901–1978), the communist intellectual who joined the Romanian Communist Party in the interwar period and was later sentenced in the 1954 political trial of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu (1900–1954), stated in his memoirs that “the first great socialist industry [in the Eastern Bloc] was that of the production of files” and that “people are but the reflection of their files”.⁴ Zilber's statement illustrates, in a suggestive manner, the importance of the institution of the file in these societies; and secret police files were probably one of the best examples in this respect. The file

1 This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020 – 2081, within PNCDI III.

2 *Direcția Generală a Securității Poporului* (The General Directorate of the People's Security) – DGSP.

3 The official designation of the Siguranța was *Direcția Poliției și Siguranței Generale* (Directorate of the Police and General Safety).

4 Șerbulescu, Andrei [Zilber, Belu] (Ed.): *Monarhia de drept dialectic* [The Monarchy Based on Marxist Dialectics]. Bucharest 1991, 136–138.

was the main tool through which the Securitate gathered information and carried out policies about those social groups and individuals, who were perceived as the main targets. Despite the centrality of the files within the work of the Securitate, until the last decade, very few contributions investigated the importance of how the archives of the Romanian secret police were structured and what their inner logic tells us about how the repressive institution worked. During the last decade, the contributions of Cristina Vatulescu, Katherine Verdery, Florin Poenaru, and Ioana Macrea-Toma discussed some aspects of what Sonja Luehrmann called “archival ecologies” of the secret police files.⁵ This study is inspired at the methodological level by some of these contributions, particularly those authored by Katherine Verdery and Florin Poenaru.

One of the key issues that needs to be addressed when analyzing the importance of the files for the secret police institution is that their content and their structure reflect the everyday bureaucratic practices of the secret police and the labyrinth-like organization of the Securitate.

These archives were at the same time the main tool and product of the Securitate employees. Consequently, there is a deep connection between administering the files and the process of designing and implementing policies within the Securitate's activity. These files reflect both how the Securitate perceived society, various groups, or particular individuals. They evidence how these targets had been evaluated, but also what decisions had been taken about them and what policies had been carried out.

Administering Files – Instrumentalizing the Nazi Past

In order to understand the logic of a specific file, it is important to identify who the departments involved in the drafting of that file were, as well as the aims behind the issuance of the documents archived within them. Most of the documents concerning the German minority during the first two decades of the communist regime in Romania have particular indicative code numbers pertaining to the so called ‘issue of German Nationalists’. In July 1948, before the repressive institution was established, drawing on the legacy of the former Siguranța, there were discussions at the level

5 Luehrman, Sonja: *Religion in Secular Archives: Soviet Atheism and Historical Knowledge*. New York 2015, 3. Cf. Vatulescu, Cristina: *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*. Stanford 2010; Verdery, Katherine: *Secrets and Truths. Ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police*. Budapest 2014; Poenaru, Florin: *Contesting Illusions: History and Intellectual Class Struggle in Post-Communist Romania*. PhD Central European University Budapest (Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology) 2013; Macrea-Toma, Ioana: *The Eyes of Radio Free Europe: Regimes of Visibility in the Cold War Archives*. In: *East Central Europe* 44 (2017), 99–127.

of the Party leadership concerning the aims and structure of the future secret police.⁶ During these deliberations it had been decided what the structure of the Securitate would be. For instance, there was a department charged with keeping national minorities and religious denominations under surveillance. This was within the First Directorate of the Securitate.⁷ The German minority was among their targets, but also the churches that played a key role in defining the identity of the German speaking groups in Romania: the Evangelical Church of Augustan Confession (for Transylvanian Saxons) and the Roman Catholic Church (for Danube Swabians).

There was a so called ‘German problem’ identified by the Siguranța, which had been informed by the emergence of the Nazi movement. When the Securitate was officially established in August 1948, this community received a different ideological definition and was renamed ‘German Nationalists’, because the Party leadership did not want to recognize that national minorities were a target of the secret police.⁸

Until the mid-1960s, one of the main tasks for the Securitate’s department in charge of national minorities was to reconstruct the organizational schemes of the former German Ethnic Group, or GEG, in Romania (*Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien*) and its annexed organizations, such as *Einsatz-Staffel* (ES), *Deutsche Jugend* (DJ) and *Deutsche Arbeiterschaft Rumäniens* (DAR). Thus, the administration of the Nazi past of the German minority became a key goal for the secret police. There were two main reasons for the importance of this activity for the local branches of the Securitate, particularly those covering the regions with significant German speaking communities. First, the activity within the National Socialist German Workers’ Party of the German Ethnic Group in Romania, and its annexed organizations, was considered a possible source of vulnerability for state security. As well as their anti-communist ideological backgrounds, these former leaders or activists of the local Nazi movement were considered to be a danger to state security as a consequence of their training, organizational skills, and personal networks in Romania and abroad. Since postwar Romania had not carried out an effective de-Nazification policy, some personalities with pro-Nazi biographies still occupied important positions within the institutions in charge with administering the cultural, religious and educational institutions of the German minority in Romania in the late 1940s and 1950s. Moreover, in view of the aforementioned failed de-Nazification, carried out by a dictatorial regime perceived as illegitimate and abusive, public opinion had not critically assessed the responsibility of the GEG leaders and their supporters in the perpetration of Nazi crimes and the instrumentalization of the resources of the

6 Cf. Oprea, Marius: *Bastionul cruzimii. O istorie a Securității (1948–1964)* [The Bastion of Cruelty: A History of the Securitate (1948–1964)]. Iași 2008, 51–54.

7 Cf. *ibid.*, 51–53, 67.

8 Cf. *ibid.* See also Arhiva Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității, București (ACNSAS) [Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives, Bucharest]. D București 016650. Vol. 3, 4. Due to the limited space available for this article, we chose not to mention the titles of the documents in the footnotes.

German minority by the Third Reich. However, their presence in these institutions was not only perceived by the Securitate as a vulnerability, but also as an opportunity. Consequently, instead of purging these people with a tainted past, the Securitate chose to keep them in their positions in exchange for their collaboration.

In order to both manage the risks entailed by keeping these people in key positions and to capitalize on the opportunities offered by this situation, it was important for the Securitate to obtain a precise view of the former organizational schemes of the Nazi movement and its annexed organizations. In this respect, reconstructing the biographies of the main activists of these organizations became an important task. During late 1930s and 1940s, a significant part of the elite of the German minority in Romania had been co-opted by recruiting them for various administrative positions within the local NSDAP and its subordinated organizations. This provided a huge opportunity for the Securitate to exert pressure to turn them into valuable 'sources' for the secret police.

Another aspect which played a key role in the activity of the Securitate concerning the so-called 'issue of German Nationalists' was the fact that the Securitate inherited the files drafted by the former Siguranța on the German minority during 1930s and 1940s. After 1933, the surveillance activity became more intense because Nazi influence gained momentum within the community. Consequently, during late 1930s and early 1940s, the Siguranța created many files on the Nazification of the Romanian Germans with detailed reports concerning who supported or opposed this process. Another valuable source of information for the Securitate were those parts of the GEG archives that ended in the hand of the Securitate in the early post-war period. Some of these files have been included in the so-called Documentary Fonds of the Securitate archives.⁹ Other documents from these archives had been included in the personal surveillance files of the leaders of the GEG created by the Securitate.¹⁰

The process of instrumentalizing the Nazi past by the secret police will be analyzed here by focusing on two case studies, both of which illustrate the main features of the Securitate's policies and techniques in this respect. The first case study focuses on how the secret police instrumentalized the past of a key member of the Nazi movement among the Romanian Germans, while the second case study concentrates on the secret police files of a regular member of the local NSDAP. The real identity of the two 'sources' used by the Securitate, which we chose as case studies to illustrate our analysis here, will not be disclosed due to Romanian legislation concerning the

⁹ See for examples the files: ACNSAS. D București 11702 and 13079.

¹⁰ The files recording surveillance activity, with a focus on the target, were named either '*dosare de verificare*' ('verification files') or '*dosare de urmărire informativă*' (the latter translated by Cristina Vatulescu as 'heightened surveillance files'). Cf. Chivu-Duta, Carmen; Albu, Mihai: *Dosarele Securității. Studii de caz* [The Securitate Files: Case Studies]. Iași 2007, 9 – 10 and Vatulescu, Police Aesthetics (cf. n. 5), 36.

Securitate files.¹¹ Consequently, we will use the code names given to them by the Securitate, when the secret police opened the so-called ‘network files’ concerning their activity.¹²

The Securitate files of the first case study deal with the activity of a leader of the Nazi youth movement in the mid 1930s, whom the Securitate assigned the code name “Lăzărescu Ion”.¹³ In 1940, the latter became the head of the DAR organization. His dealings with the Securitate had been discussed in detail by William Totok and Elena-Irina Macovei in their contributions.¹⁴

The second case that we chose to illustrate our argument is a regular member of the local NSDAP, whose code name was “Nicolae Dima”. The secret police, which has no interest in downplaying the relevance of its former political activity, placed “Dima” in the category of those who has not asserted themselves as active members within the organizations controlled by the local Nazi movement.¹⁵

Both cases are very good examples of how the file worked as a tool of administering the past of those who became the targets of the secret police. In these cases it was not only the state institutions, but also citizens themselves that became skilled administrators of their own political biographies. On the one side, when looking to

11 Here we use the term ‘source’ of the Securitate with the meaning defined by the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS), the institution in charge with the custody of the former Securitate archives. According to Dragoș Petrescu the CNSAS Board “introduced in its official documents and press communiqués the notion of *source* of the former Securitate”, by which CNSAS made the distinction “between a source and a collaborator of the Securitate”; the decision taken by the CNSAS board was “to use the term source for an individual who only contributed with information to the completion of a given file, under their real or code names”, while the “term collaborator applies to an individual whose case was brought in front of the ACJ (Administrative Court of Justice), passed through all legal proceedings including the right to appeal, and a final verdict of collaboration was issued by a court of law.” Petrescu, Dragoș: *Law in Action in Romania, 2008–2018: Context, Agency, and Innovation in the Process of Transitional Justice*. In: *Journal of Romanian Studies* 2/2 (2020), 195–217, here 203, 211. Cf. CNSAS: Comunicat de presă. 17.01.2012. URL: <http://www.cnsas.ro/documente/comunicate%20presa/2012/Comunicat%20presa%202012.01.17.pdf> (12.01.2022).

12 The files recording the activity of a ‘source’ of the Securitate, with a focus on the informer, were named in the Securitate’s bureaucratic parlance ‘*dosare de rețea*’ (‘network files’). Cf. Chivu-Duta/Albu, *Dosarele Securității* (cf. n. 10), 9f. and Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics* (cf. n. 5), 36.

13 Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 2732. Vol. 1, 17.

14 Cf. Totok, William: *Geschichtspolitische Beeinflussung des Auslands durch die Securitate*. In: Kühner-Wielach, Florian; Nowotnick, Michaela (Ed.): *Aus den Giftschränken des Kommunismus: Methodische Fragen zum Umgang mit Überwachungsakten in Zentral- und Südosteuropa*. Regensburg 2018, 359–386; idem; Macovei, Elena-Irina: *De la S. D. la Securitate. Biografia secretă a lui Fritz Cloos* (1 mai 1909, Brașov – 3 mai 2004, Waakirchen), conservată în arhiva CNSAS [From SD to Securitate: The Secret Biography of Fritz Cloos (1 May 1909, Brașov – 3 May 2004, Waakirchen), Reconstructed According to the CNSAS Archives]. In: *Caietele CNSAS* 14 (2014), 201–221, here 202. See also the article by William Totok in this issue.

15 Cf. ACNSAS. R 137794. Vol. 1, 1–4; ACNSAS. I 185113. Vol. 1, 1–8. See also the article by William Totok in this issue.

the so-called 'surveillance files' (*dosare informative*) or to 'criminal files' (*dosare penale*), drafted in order to support accusation in court, one can see how the political components of a biography were frequently overemphasized by the Securitate in order to reach its goals; the conviction of those persons for instance. On the other side, those members of the German minority with a Nazi past usually tried to hide or downplay those parts of their biographies which entailed collaboration with, or active involvement in, the Nazi movement. The secret police also paid attention to how people presented their former political stances or activities in the official biographies they submitted to state institutions. With regard to the case studies we chose, what is specific to the first case is the fact that "Lăzărescu" was sent to the FRG for intelligence activities. This was before the strategy of instrumentalizing the emigration of Romanian Germans in order to recruit 'sources' or exerting influence in the Western countries turned into a regular practice of the secret police. In the case of "Lăzărescu", the Securitate was able to instrumentalize his long term and complex activity within the local Nazi movement, which was well documented by the secret police.

From 1932 to 1938, "Lăzărescu" was the leader of the Nazi controlled organization *Deutsche Jugend in Rumänien*.¹⁶ In the autumn of 1940, when the NSDAP of the GEG seized control of the German minority in Romania, "Lăzărescu" was appointed by the leadership of the former as head of the DAR organization.¹⁷ Following the arrest of the leader of the GEG, Andreas Schmidt (1912–1948), in February 1945, "Lăzărescu" became the informal leader of the local Nazi movement. From 1939 until his arrest by the NKVD in March 1945, "Lăzărescu" was also a *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) agent within the *SD-Ausland's* network in Romania.¹⁸ Following Schmidt's arrest, Nazi Germany assigned to "Lăzărescu" the task of organizing an anti-Soviet resistance in Transylvania. In March 1945, the Soviet troops captured and imprisoned him in the Soviet Union.¹⁹ After ten years of imprisonment, the Soviet authorities sent him back to Romania in 1955. Once returned to his native country, "Lăzărescu" was interrogated by the Securitate officers. He provided abundant information about those who had previously been involved in the leadership of the GEG.²⁰ Under the pressure of internment into a labour camp or his conviction in a trial due to his Nazi past, "Lăzărescu" agreed to become a 'source' of the Securitate in April

¹⁶ Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 2732. Vol. 1, 17.

¹⁷ Cf. Totok/Macovei, De la S. D. la Securitate (cf. n. 14), 202.

¹⁸ Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 2732. Vol. 1, 17. For the intelligence activity of the *SD-Ausland* in Romania cf. Trașcă, Ottmar: Die Deutsche Volksgruppe und die Tätigkeit des Amtes VI des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes (SD-Ausland) in Rumänien 1940–1944. In: Olschowsky, Burkhard; Loose, Ingo (Ed.): Nationalsozialismus und Regionalbewusstsein im östlichen Europa. München 2016, 269–289.

¹⁹ Cf. Totok/Macovei, De la S. D. la Securitate (cf. n. 14), 205.

²⁰ Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 2731, passim. He disclosed to the Securitate about the identity of various members of the SD network in Romania, who previously had not been identified. Cf. ACNSAS. I 475/Sibiu (Hans Müller). Rola 11. Vol. 2, 12–14.

1956.²¹ “Lăzărescu” was already very experienced in intelligence work as an SD agent, so proved to be very useful for the Securitate.²²

The Securitate managed to skilfully instrumentalize the former dealings of our second case, code named “Dima”, with local Nazi organizations. Due to his former membership of the NSDAP and its annexed organizations, the ES and the DAR, “Dima” was interned in labour camps in 1945.²³ After returning home from the forced internment, “Dima” applied for a job in a factory in Brașov (Kronstadt). Here he submitted a biography in which he mentioned that he graduated in Law and Economics during 1930s, and that he worked in a management position at a factory in Brașov during the late 1930s.²⁴ What he failed to mention was the fact that, as with many other members of the Transylvanian Saxon middle class in Brașov, he joined the local NSDAP and the ES and DAR organizations after the local Nazi movement seized control of the German minority in 1940. The fact that “Dima” tried to hide this part of his past was perceived by the Securitate as a vulnerability.²⁵

However, since he has not been among the leaders of the Nazi movement, “Dima” had not attracted the attention of the Securitate until February 1957. At that time, he took part in local church elections for an administrative position within the presbytery of the parish of the Evangelical Church of Augustan Confession in Brașov. “Dima” was elected to this position with the support of the Brașov city parish pastor Konrad Möckel (1892–1965) and he was involved in supporting the latter in reactivating the local traditional forms of socialization called *Nachbarschaften* (neighbourhoods), *Bruderschaften* and *Schwesterschaften* (brotherhoods of the Transylvanian Saxon youth). While, before 1956, the repressive institutions of the communist regime displayed some tolerance towards these traditional forms of socialization of the Transylvanian Saxons, the 1956 Hungarian revolution radically changed the Securitate’s approach as to what was and what was not tolerable from the communist regime’s point of view. More precisely, all forms of socialization of youth, acting outside the control of the Party and its structures, became intolerable and were considered high risk for state security. This was because of the important role played by student associations in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.

After February 1957, “Dima” became a target of intense surveillance by the local Securitate and was screened by the secret police, who opened a ‘surveillance file’ on his name. The fact that “Dima” has not mentioned his membership of the local Nazi-controlled organizations in his official biographies submitted in 1949, to the factory where he worked in a management position, attracted the attention of the Securi-

21 Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 2732. Vol. 1, 16 f.

22 Cf. Totok/Macovei, De la S. D. la Securitate (cf. n. 14), 208.

23 Cf. Baier, Hannelore (Ed.): *Deportarea etnicilor germani din România în Uniunea Sovietică 1945* [The Deportation of the Romanian Germans to Soviet Union 1945]. Sibiu 1994.

24 Cf. ACNSAS. R 137794. Vol. 1, 38 f.

25 Cf. ACNSAS. I 185113. Vol. 1, 1–8 and ACNSAS. R 137794. Vol. 1, 1–36.

tate.²⁶ After gathering information about him, the Stalin Regional Directorate²⁷ of the Securitate brought “Dima” to the local Securitate headquarters in March 1957. Along with city parish pastor Konrad Möckel, he was interrogated about his involvement in reviving the traditional forms of solidarization among the Transylvanian Saxons called *Nachbarschaften*. During the interrogation, he continued to deny his involvement in the local Nazi movement.²⁸ When the Securitate officer confronted him with an original copy of the adhesion request signed by himself, “Dima” stated during his interrogation that he has not said “the truth about his past because he was afraid about the future of his family”.²⁹

The fact that the Securitate had this document meant that sections of the former archives of the GEG and its subordinated organizations had come into its hands. Under the pressure of disclosing his past and being involved in criminal investigations launched by the Securitate concerning the revival of the *Nachbarschaften*, *Bruderschaften* and *Schwesterschaften* in Braşov (which were concluded with the ‘Black Church’ Trial in December 1958), “Dima” became a ‘source’ of the Securitate.³⁰ The first tasks assigned to “Dima” by the secret police were in fact related precisely with this issue of the revival of the *Nachbarschaften* among the Transylvanian Saxons. He was also used by the secret police from 1957 to 1964 to obtain information about the activity of different personalities of the Evangelical Church of Augustan Confession in Romania. For example, he provided information about the staff of the church at central and local level, particularly about Konrad Möckel, who was sentenced in the so-called ‘Black Church’ political trial in December 1958.³¹ He was also instructed in January 1966 to keep the activity of Bishop Friedrich Müller-Langenthal (1884–1969) under surveillance.³²

Capturing personal networks and extending Securitate's operations in the West

As Katherine Verdery rightly points out, the Securitate perceived individuals as components of a social network and instrumentalized them taking into account the features of these networks.³³ For example, a file from the Documentary Fonds on the

²⁶ Cf. ACNSAS. R 137794. Vol. 1, 1–4.

²⁷ ‘Oraşul Stalin’ was the official name of the city Braşov from 1950 to 1960.

²⁸ Cf. ACNSAS. R 137794. Vol. 1, 38f.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 12f.

³¹ Cf. Pintilescu, Corneliu: Die Konstruktion politischer Vergehen im Diskurs: Eine vergleichende Analyse dreier Prozesse gegen Angehörige der deutschen Minderheit Rumäniens (1958–1962). In: *Transylvanian Review* 22/4 (2013), 116–140.

³² Cf. ACNSAS. R 137794. Vol. 1, 8–11.

³³ Cf. Verdery, *Secrets and Truths* (cf. n. 5), 187.

issue of ‘German Nationalists’ entailed included an evaluation of a Catholic priest from Timișoara (Temeswar) drafted by a Securitate officer. After the latter evaluated the potential of using the priest as a ‘source’ of information for the secret police the conclusion was: “He cannot be used” (as a ‘source’), because he was “a withdrawn person” with a social network that was considered by the Securitate officers to be very limited.³⁴ From this we can see that the Securitate evaluated a person’s social network as well as their potential danger for state security.³⁵

After analyzing the social network of a ‘target’, the Securitate evaluated how the institution could capture and instrumentalize this network in order to turn it into a source of information. Consequently, it is no coincidence that one of the main categories of files, those reflecting the activity of a ‘source’, were labelled in the Securitate’s bureaucratic parlance ‘network files’ (*dosare de rețea*).

“Lăzărescu” aroused the interest of the Securitate because of his extended network of personal relations created during late 1930s and early 1940s. These features of “Lăzărescu”’s network explains the decision of the secret police from July 1960 to prepare him for “intelligence activities abroad”.³⁶ The Securitate’s plan was to send him to West Germany following the approval of his application for an emigration visa.³⁷ The fact that he occupied key leadership positions within the local Nazi movement functioned as a warranty for his former colleagues, who did not suspect him of possible connections with the Securitate. The secret police also trained “Lăzărescu” for his future mission by introducing him to the techniques of preserving conspirativity and clarifying the future goals of his activity abroad.³⁸ Concerning the latter, the Securitate officers instructed “Lăzărescu” to focus on several objectives. The most important of these was to gather information concerning the activity and the inner structure of the *Landmannschaften* of the Romanian Germans, but also to influence their leadership. “Lăzărescu”’s results in this respect exceeded the expectations of the Securitate. He managed not only to inform the Securitate in detail about the most important discussions and decisions within these *Landmannschaften*, but also provided a lot of useful information about several key personalities within the diaspora of Romanian Germans.³⁹

The second case, known as “Dima”, shows several similarities with that of “Lăzărescu”. Both cases reflect a turn in the Securitate’s policies during the 1960s, which perceived the increase in mobility between West and East to be a source of opportunity. However, there are also several differences which occur mainly as a result of the different personal trajectories between the two cases. While “Lăzărescu” chose to emigrate to West Germany, “Dima” was among those Romanian Germans who displayed

34 ACNSAS. D Timiș 8834. Vol. 1, 313.

35 Cf. Poenaru, *Contesting Illusions* (cf. n. 5), 132.

36 ACNSAS. SIE 2732. Vol. 2, 4.

37 Cf. Totok/Macovei, *De la S. D. la Securitate* (cf. n. 14), 214.

38 Cf. ACNSAS. SIE 2732. Vol. 2, 42–57.

39 Cf. Totok/Macovei, *De la S. D. la Securitate* (cf. n. 14), 213.

an anti-emigration attitude, meaning that the Securitate's instrumentalization of "Dima"'s social network took another path.

When instructing "Dima" on the sort of information he should provide, the Securitate focused on the social milieu around Konrad Möckel in the period from 1957 to 1958. Starting from this point, the information provided by "Dima" acquired a larger scope, following his personal networks in the community and the church. The Evangelical Church of Augustan Confession was a key target of Securitate policies since the institution held a strong position of authority and influence among its parishioners in the post-war period. However, due to the consistent and useful character of the information provided by "Dima", the Securitate took the decision, in 1964, to extend the scope of its activity to the diaspora of Romanian Germans.⁴⁰

The right circumstances to send "Dima" to collect information from abroad came up in December 1964, when he submitted an application for a tourist visa. The Securitate officers dealing with his case asked the institution in charge with issuing exit visas to approve his request because "Dima" had previously provided "information which entailed operative value".⁴¹ The secret police made the decision to use him for gathering information from abroad because of his "multiple personal relations in West Germany".⁴² "Dima" went through the usual complex training that was required before starting such a mission. This was undertaken by an officer from the Securitate, after a deep verification of "Dima"'s trustworthiness and of the risks involved for the secret police. In both cases, the Securitate files do not suggest that his former Nazi past was perceived to be a source of high risk for the operations of the secret police in the event of possible disclosures. "Dima"'s main target was the *Landsmannschaft* of the Transylvanian Saxons.⁴³ In the Securitate's report issued in August 1967, which approved the mission of "Dima" to West Germany during his visit from 1967, he was asked to focus his activity on the following key issues:

- "Who, from those he will meet in the FRG, will have hostile attitude towards Romania?"
- "Do these persons have connections with the leadership of the *Landsmannschaft* [of the Transylvanian Saxons] and the Federal Intelligence Service [*Bundesnachrichtendienst*]?"
- "What changes occurred within the organizational system of the *Landsmannschaften*, what tasks had been assigned to these organizations and what are their main directions of activity?"
- "What inner conflicts exist between different groups in these organizations?"⁴⁴

Another issue which was of interest to the Securitate was the attitude of the persons he met in West Germany about the Ceaușescu regime's domestic and foreign poli-

⁴⁰ Cf. ACNSAS. R 137794. Vol. 1, 56–64.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*, 83.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

cies.⁴⁵ This interest was aroused as a result of the reorientation of the Romanian foreign policy towards the West which started in the 1960s, and the gradual distancing from Soviet Union. During the 1970s, while the policy of the Ceaușescu regime towards national minorities took a shift towards reducing the previously granted benefits, a trend that aroused criticism abroad, the Party leadership assigned to the secret police the task of combating it. In 1974, he was asked by a Securitate officer to disseminate, in West Germany, some narratives arguing that Ceaușescu's regime was granting to national minorities all fundamental rights, and that the Evangelical Church enjoyed religious rights in Romania.⁴⁶ The Securitate asked "Dima" to promote this discourse during his planned meeting with Erhard Plesch (1910–1977), the head of the *Landsmannschaft* of the Transylvanian Saxons. He was also instructed to convince Plesch that the mass emigration of the Romanian Germans to the FRG was not the solution of the problem. Consequently, "Dima"'s main mission this time was to combat the pro-emigration discourse of some personalities within the diaspora of the Romanian Germans.⁴⁷

In this respect, as part of the instructions "Dima" had received in September 1976, before a trip he made to West Germany, the Securitate officers asked him to publish an article in the press of the diaspora of the Romanian Germans in West Germany which criticized pro-emigration propaganda, and that he should observe the reactions this text aroused.⁴⁸ Drawing on this feedback, the Securitate sought to draft a document for a so called 'disinformation' campaign. The aim of this was to instruct the agents of influence of the secret police to combat the trend towards emigration amongst Romanian Germans.⁴⁹

According to an evaluation of his activity abroad, drafted in January 1966 by the Brașov Regional Directorate of the Securitate, "Dima" performed well in the FRG. In the Securitate's view, he did his best to carry out the tasks that had been assigned to him and he proved "skilful in the discussions he had with the leaders of the organizations of *Volksdeutsche* from the FRG".⁵⁰ For example, during his trip to West Germany from the autumn of 1965, "Dima" had contact with the leaders of the diaspora of Transylvanian Saxons, such as Erhard Plesch, Paul Philippi (1923–2018),⁵¹ Hans Philippi and Otto Folberth (1896–1991). He attended a meeting of the *Landsmannschaft* of the Transylvanian Saxons in Heidelberg and provided information to the Securitate concerning the activity of this organization and its leaders. In particular, he provided a lot of details concerning the dissensions between the groups within the

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 114 f.

⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 136 f.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 137 f.

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 141.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁵¹ On Paul Philippi see also the article by Virgiliu Țărău in this issue.

diaspora of the Romanian Germans led by Erhard Plesch (who was a former colleague of “Dima”) and Hans Philippi.⁵²

The secret police checked the ‘sincerity’ of “Dima”’s informations by comparing them with other sources and by phone interceptions.⁵³ Besides, getting approval for visiting his relatives and having some costs reimbursed, “Dima” was also paid for providing information with cash. For example, in 1966 he received 500 lei for information obtained during his mission in the FRG, the equivalent of around a month’s salary in Romania at that time.⁵⁴ The Securitate also valued the fact that “Dima” became a messenger between the *Landsmannschaft* of the Transylvanian Saxons and Bishop Friedrich Müller-Langenthal. Because of this the secret police were able to intercept messages sent or received by the bishop from the former during late 1960s.

Conclusions

The trajectory of the policies of the Securitate in these two cases, and how their files evolved were, to a certain degree, similar. Both “Lăzărescu” and “Dima” were activated in Romania during the 1950s as ‘sources’ for the activities of the elite of Romanian Germans which, in some cases, became useful data for legitimizing arrests and subsequent sentences issued by military courts. Because they proved useful in this period, and they had large networks of personal relations in West Germany, the Securitate decided to turn them into ‘sources’ mainly used to obtain information about the diaspora of the Romanian Germans, but also to act as ‘agents of influence’ who could disseminate the narratives promoted by Ceaușescu’s regime on different topics and convince key individuals in the community to adopt particular attitudes on specific issues. Their files had a similar structure with a shift during 1960s, when the Securitate analysed their activity and decided to direct it more towards targets from abroad. The activity of the two ‘sources’ also became more complex since it entailed not only gathering information but also exerting influence.

Another element of similarity of the two cases relates to how the Securitate instrumentalized Nazi past in two directions. First, this past was turned into a means of coercion to obtain a commitment from the two to gather information for the Securitate. In both cases rejecting the offer of the Securitate meant to accept the risk of being sentenced by a military court in a political trial. Second, this Nazi past was perceived by the Securitate as an opportunity. Both “Lăzărescu” and “Dima” had some personal relations with people which persisted during and in the aftermath of the Second World War in West Germany. These networks of personal relations had been captured by the Securitate and turned into channels of obtaining

52 Cf. *ibid.*, 89.

53 Cf. *ibid.*, 90.

54 Cf. *ibid.*, 17.

sensitive information about the leadership of the *Landsmannschaften* of Romanian Germans. Consequently, we could conclude that the secret police perceived the emigration process not only as a challenge caused by the circulation of people between West and East, but also as a significant source of opportunities for carrying out intelligence activities in the West.