

The Life of the Romanian Theologian Antonie Plamadeala as a Runaway from the Secret Police  
and as a Political Prisoner in Communist Romania

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A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of Theological Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Theological Studies) at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2015

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**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY**

**School of Graduate Studies**

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## ABSTRACT

The Life of the Romanian Theologian Antonie Plamadeala as a Runaway from the Secret Police and as a Political Prisoner in Communist Romania

**Cristina Plamadeala**

The present work discusses the life of the Romanian theologian Antonie Plamadeala (1926-2005) in the 1940s-1950s. More specifically, it tells the story of his refuge from Bessarabia to Romania, of his run from Romania's secret police (Securitate) and of his years of incarceration as a political prisoner for alleged ties to the Legionary Movement, known for its Fascist, paramilitary and anti-Semitic activity and rhetoric. This work argues that Plamadeala was most likely not a Legionary, as initially accused by Securitate. Instead, his arrest may have been caused by his involvement in the resistance movement against the Communist regime, first through his involvement with the publication of the newspaper *The Echo of Bessarabia* and, later, via his association with Legionaries and ties with the Vladimiresti monastery, known for its blunt stand against Communism in the 1950s. In regards to his experience in prison, this thesis suggests that Plamadeala's prison years were determinetal to his inner identity and character.

## **AKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to thank my supervisor Dr. Lucian Turcescu for the ideas and feedback provided in the process of writing of my thesis, which helped improve its quality greatly. In addition, I thank the entire Department of Theological Studies at Concordia University for allowing me to be their student, an opportunity from which I grew both academically and personally. My gratitude, also, goes to the staff at the Moldovan National Archives, in Chisinau, Moldova and at the National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives, in Bucharest, Romania for allowing me to consult the archival files which served as basis of my present research. Last but not least, I also thank my family, without whom nothing in my life would have been possible.

## FOREWORD AND DEDICATION

When I was about ten years old, I received through my father a gift, a very unusual gift for a little girl who read mostly fairy tales—a collection of “heavy literature,” a set of books with theological and philosophical undertones written by someone who, as my father explained to me, was a distant relative of ours. The author’s name was Antonie Plamadeala, and he was then (1994) a Metropolitan of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Puzzled and confused, I placed those books on a book shelf, promising myself that one day I will be able to read and understand them, but also to find out about the man who gave me those books.

As a child, I knew that Antonie’s family left my country for Romania in 1944 while my grandfather, Ilie Plamadeala, for reasons unknown to me, could not. When I thought about my grandfather Ilie, I often wondered what happened to the Plamadealas who crossed the Prut River during World War II, attempting to avoid the Soviet invasion of Bessarabia. In this thesis, I tell their story, with a focus on the life of Antonie. In a way, I am telling the story my grandfather most probably wished he knew, but died without finding out about it. That is why this thesis is dedicated in his honor. Ilie Plamadeala passed away in 1997, in my native village Dahnovici, in the Republic of Moldova.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
<i>Literature review and problematic.....</i>	1
<i>Research questions and hypothesis.....</i>	2
<i>Key sources.....</i>	3
<i>Archival research objectives.....</i>	3
<i>Reliability to tell the truth or lack thereof of archival files and memoirs.....</i>	4
<i>Methodology.....</i>	5
<i>Final thoughts.....</i>	6
Chapter 1 Bessarabia and the refuge across the Prut River .....	8
<i>Bessarabia .....</i>	8
<i>Stolniceni-Plamadeala's native village.....</i>	11
<i>The order of arrest.....</i>	14
Chapter 2 Antonie Plamadeala and the Legionary Movement .....	18
<i>A brief history of the Legionary movement .....</i>	18
<i>Students' accusations of ties to the Legionary movement .....</i>	20
<i>The establishment of the Communist regime in Romania and its relation to the Orthodox Church.....</i>	22
<i>The manifesto "Christian Brothers" and the commencement of students' arrests .....</i>	28
<i>The Legionary Movement as revealed by Securitate documents.....</i>	29
Chapter 3 Years on the run from the Securitate, 1948-1954.....	36
<i>About the impossibility to understand fully the years as a runaway in Plamadeala's life.....</i>	36
<i>Plamadeala's life on the run within a historical context .....</i>	37
<i>First year on the run: from Bucharest to Brasov and Bucharest again, then to Baia Mare .....</i>	38
<i>Studies in Cluj.....</i>	41
<i>Entrance in the monastic life .....</i>	43
<i>Crasna Gorjeana and Slatina.....</i>	46
Chapter 4 The arrest .....	50
<i>The arrest at the St. Parascheva feast in Iasi .....</i>	50
<i>Mystery behind Plamadeala's arrest .....</i>	53
<i>The Vladimiresti controversy.....</i>	53
<i>From Iasi to Bucharest and then to Jilava Prison .....</i>	57
Chapter 5 Trial and prison discharge.....	59

<i>“Faculty” Jilava</i> .....	59
<i>Request for retrial</i> .....	61
<i>Galati prison and the interrogations related to Vladimiresti</i> .....	63
<i>Court hearing without the presence of Plamadeala</i> .....	66
<i>Court hearings following the Vladimiresti-related interrogations</i> .....	67
<i>Final sentence and prison discharge</i> .....	68
Chapter 6.....	70
<i>How to describe Plamadeala’s years in prison?</i> .....	70
<i>Physical torture</i> .....	70
<i>Other methods used to obtain information from Plamadeala</i> .....	71
<i>Moments of civility and humanity in prison</i> .....	73
<i>Three Hours in Hell</i> .....	74
<i>The book’s main purpose: criticism of totalitarianism and its effects on humanity</i> .....	75
<i>Reclaiming one’s true identity</i> .....	76
<i>Pathological fear induced by a totalitarian regime</i> .....	76
<i>Adam-Ghast</i> .....	77
<i>The legend about three hours in hell</i> .....	77
<i>Understanding Plamadeala’s prison years through his autobiographical work</i> .....	79
Conclusion .....	80

## **Introduction**

A human's life, regardless of one's apparent significance or lack of it in the evolution of society, is enigmatic. Humans are by nature unpredictable and when they interact with others, as most humans do, the degree of unpredictability, uncertainty, and hence of mystery about someone and someone's surroundings increases greatly. Adding to that the subjective nature in which one experiences, understands and explains that which one experiences or witnesses, and one's reluctance to disclose everything about oneself, one rapidly realizes that to tell the story of a person's life is to attempt to walk into a "labyrinth of the unknown" and come out of it with possibly no more certainty than before entering in it about that which is in that "labyrinth."

With this in mind, I still chose to tell the story of a person's life whose name was Antonie Plamadeala<sup>1</sup> (1926-2005). He was a Christian Orthodox Church leader in Romania during its Communist regime and after its fall, in 1989. Plamadeala's life is both remarkable and intriguing, easily described, to use the famous expression, as going "from rags to riches," but not necessarily in the context of monetary gain, but in the manner in which the trajectory of his life evolved from a professional and academic point of view: A village boy from a war-torn region of the Romanian Kingdom, now part of the Republic of Moldova, who was a political prisoner in Communist penitentiaries, who lived in poverty, obscurity and isolation for at least two decades of his life— his youth— was later sent to Oxford University in the 1970s to complete his doctoral studies in theology. He then returned within Romania's Church circle after having been initially defrocked and stripped of his academic credentials and forced to work in a plant. He then became Metropolitan of Transylvania (1982), publishing around forty books, and hundreds of articles, essays, book reviews and sermons that placed him as one of Romania's well-known intellectuals and theologians of his time. This thesis tells Plamadeala's life story up and including his years in prison, with a focus on his experience with Romania's secret police, also known by its Romanian name Securitate.

### *Literature review and problematic*

Although much is known on the biography of this important figure of the Romanian culture and Orthodox Church, the knowledge of which is also due, to an extent, to the

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for a picture of Plamadeala when he was arrested by the Romanian secret police in 1954, and appendix 2—for a picture of him in a later stage in his life.



metropolitan himself, who wrote rather openly on his life in his numerous works, little has been written about his experiences while on the run from Securitate and while in prison. What is known thus far about this period in Plamadeala's life is presented in the recently published book *Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala, Detalii Biografice (Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala, Biographical Details)*, authored by the theologian's younger brother, Mihai Plamadeala, and the historian Adrian N. Petcu. The book offers exhaustive information concerning the theologian's experience as a runaway from the Securitate and while incarcerated.

In addition to this book, worthy to be mentioned are the works written by Plamadeala or about him, with a focus on his life history. Among the most important ones are: Carmen Dumitriu's *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala. Convorbiri cu Dragos Seuleanu si Carmen Dumitriu* (The Memories of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala: Discussions with Dragos Seuleanu and Carmen Dumitriu); Antonie Plamadeala's *Rugul Aprins* (The Burning Bush) and *Basarabia* (Bessarabia); Artur Silvestri's *Modelul "Omului Mare." Zece "Convorbiri de amurg" cu Antonie Plamadeala, Urmate de "Douazeci si Opt de Scrisori de Altadata"* (The Model of the "Great Figure." Ten "Conversations at Sunset" with Antonie Plamadeala, followed by "Twenty Eight Letters from the Past"); and Mihai Plamadeala's *Refugiul. Deznadeje si Speranta* (Refuge. Hopelessness and Hope). Although useful in familiarizing oneself with some significant parts of his life, none of them combines Plamadeala's memoirs, Securitate's documents written about him, his brother's writings about the theologian's life, and Plamadeala's autobiographical book *Trei Ceasuri in Iad* (Three Hours in Hell) in which he describes his experience in prison and after his release, all to provide an arguably more comprehensive analysis of what was Plamadeala's youth like. This thesis aims to accomplish this very goal.

### *Research questions and hypothesis*

In writing my thesis, I attempted to answer one key question: namely, what happened to Plamadeala in the 1940s-1950s? In doing so, two more questions arose: why was Plamadeala arrested and what happened to Plamadeala in prison? Answering these questions proved to be more complex than raising them. That is because the key sources used to deduce these answers—Securitate documents and the theologian's memoirs—are difficult to interpret, at times ambiguous, and arguably not necessarily always reflective of the truth. Facing these obstacles, nonetheless, I argue that although arrested for alleged ties to the notorious Fascist and anti-

Semitic Legionary Movement, about which I will discuss in greater detail in chapter 2 of this work, Plamadeala was most probably not a member of this organization. His arrest was most likely caused by his involvement in the resistance movement against the Communist regime, first through his involvement with the publication of the newspaper *The Echo of Bessarabia* and, later, via his association with Legionaries and ties with the Vladimiresti monastery, known for its blunt stand against Communism in the 1950s. In regards to his experience in prison, my thesis suggests that Plamadeala's prison years were a turning point in his life, possibly decisive in the way his character was shaped as a result of the experiences he had while incarcerated.

Returning to the key question that compelled me to write this thesis, namely what happened to the theologian in 1940s-1950s, the answer is found in every chapter of this work: he faced unusually trying situations, first as a refugee from Bessarabia (chapter 1), then as a theology student accused of ties to the Legionary Movement (chapter 2), later, on the run from Securitate (chapter 3) and then arrested and incarcerated in prison (chapters 4-6).

### *Key sources*

Any academic work is as good as the sources one uses to write it and the way in which one interprets them. In my case, the main two sources employed to write this theologian's life—Securitate documents and his memoirs—are similar in that they demand cautiousness in interpreting them yet different in the apparent dichotomy of “oppressor versus oppressed” they may exhibit to the one perusing them. A key task in treating these sources that seemingly embrace opposite perspectives was reconciling them in a single narrative. To explain this further, I will first provide a brief description of these key sources and then familiarize the reader with the methodology employed to write Plamadeala's biography.

### *Archival research objectives*

My archival research entailed the consultation of files at both the Moldovan National Archives, in Chisinau, Moldova and at the Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives known for its acronym ACNSAS. At ACNSAS, located in Bucharest, Romania, I was given access to thirteen files or fonds, ten of which are penal fonds (fond penal), hereinafter referred to as PF, and three operative fonds (fond operativ), hereinafter referred to as OF. In total, I consulted more than 2000 pages of documents at ACNSAS and close to 150 pages at the

Moldovan National Archives.

At the Moldovan National Archives I sought to find any documents that were issued on Plamadeala during his studies at the theological seminary in the city of Chisinau, prior to his exile to Romania in 1944, as a result of the Soviet invasion of his homeland. My goal was to find any evidence that may have linked Plamadeala to the Legionary Movement while he lived in this former Romanian province. I found no such evidence in either the Moldovan Archives or at ACNSAS, where I consulted files about Plamadeala's arrest, trial and incarceration, which served as basis for the discussion of these events in Plamadeala's life.

*Reliability to tell the truth or lack thereof of archival files and memoirs*

Despite the wide usage of secret files as a “transitional justice method,” especially employed in countries with a Communist past, archival sources are not necessarily always reliable to speak the truth.<sup>2</sup> Lavinia Stan and Nadia Nedelsky argue that “file access’s effectiveness as a tool of truth revelation depends on the authenticity, completeness, and reliability of the secret archives, none of which should be taken for granted.”<sup>3</sup> In some cases, secret police files may have been destroyed or modified by secret agents in order to further incriminate some or cover up other individuals’ crimes. In Romania, for example, 100,000 files were “lost, ‘misplaced,’ or destroyed by the case officers.”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it may have also been possible that some secret agents provided faulty reports in a deliberate manner. As Stan puts it, “in certain cases secret officers branded innocent individuals as victims or secret informers because of pressures to prove themselves as valuable agents worthy of promotion, to maintain large networks of active informers, or even to pocket the small honorary tips informers occasionally received.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly to Stan, Raluca Ursache warns one of the possible “fabrication” of dossiers by secret agents, with the goal of attaining the “required quota of recruitments and information activity.”<sup>6</sup> One thing is clear: secret archival documents were most likely created to remain *secret* to the public eye. They were not written, as Ursache puts it, “to

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<sup>2</sup> Lavinia Stan and Nadia Nedelsky. “Access to Secret Files” in *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Raluca Ursache. “Archival Records as Evidence” in *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 1, p. 114.

serve the needs of historians,”<sup>7</sup> but to accumulate information about individuals with the ultimate scope of causing harm.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, when consulting such files, one must take into account that those who wrote them most probably never thought that their work—their meticulously and laboriously written files—would eventually be read by someone other than their colleagues or superiors.

In respect to one’s memoirs, autobiographical notes and interviews provided about one’s life, types of sources I have also used in my thesis, their ability to reveal the truth might also be questioned. In some cases, information conveyed in the theologian’s memoirs were confirmed by Securitate documents, as it will be shown in this thesis. Other times, as it was the case for Plamadeala’s refuge from Bessarabia to Romania (chapter 1) and his years on the run from Securitate (chapter 3), for example, such details were presented as they were narrated by the theologian with no full certainty from my part that what he told was indeed free of any error, whether or not deliberate. In Plamadeala’s case, the biggest issue to be addressed here in this respect concerns not as much the potential errors in his memoirs, but his reluctance to speak of his past, especially about traumatic experiences. About this I speak in the last chapter of my work.

### *Methodology*

In writing the thesis, I drew on the historical analysis method to interpret archival documents and on the autoethnographic research method to interpret Plamadeala’s memoirs and autobiographical notes and interviews provided about his life. In a nutshell, the historical analysis method seeks to comprehend the past by examining the elements, objects, documents, etc. that remained in the present from the period in question.<sup>9</sup> The historical analysis’ main premise is to unravel the truth concerning the era studied, the socio-political and cultural forces at place one may infer from the objects and texts dating from that time. Although there is disagreement among scholars on the researcher’s ability to “nullify” or to not permit the present to bias one’s understanding of the past, this research model stresses the need to “release the true

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Philip Gardner. “Historical Analysis” in *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), pp. 124-136.

record of the past which is perceived as immanent in the sources” consulted.<sup>10</sup>

The autoethnographic research model seeks to grasp the connection between the author’s life-story, as presented in autobiographical texts, and the socio-cultural circumstances in which this story is developed. The primary goal of this research method is to attempt to comprehend one’s biography within the ethnographic milieu in which one’s life evolved. Given the unavoidable subjectivity of the author’s point of view towards one’s life story, this research method calls upon “reflective and critical approaches”<sup>11</sup> towards the analysis of autoethnographic texts, and attempts to apprehend one’s life events within the paradigm of the culture and society in which one existed.

### *Final thoughts*

The work presented here is, I argue, a rather intriguing story about a crucial period in Plamadeala’s life, a narration in which I allowed two rather opposing voices, Securitate and the theologian, to tell it. Given that both “narrators” may have been at times, as discussed above, fabricating or withholding information, the extent of which I am incapable to identify, this story is undoubtedly incomplete. Still, it is my hope that the reader finds noteworthy the experiences Plamadeala lived in his youth, not only because they concern Plamadeala the Romanian theologian, but because many other young men and women of his era lived through similar experiences like he did. His story offers one a glimpse into Communist Romania in the 1940s-1950s, and, in that sense, talks indirectly about many other Romanian youths of this time, some of who are also mentioned in this thesis.

Last but not least, this story is noteworthy because of its connection to Plamadeala’s theological work. This he himself suggested in an interview he provided in his later years to several Romanian journalists.<sup>12</sup> Hence, the understanding and appreciation of his theological work entails to a certain degree one’s familiarity with his biography. Theology is the study of the Divine; it is the pursuit of truth pertaining to one’s relation with God. Such intellectual and spiritual pursuits often emerge in moments of trials and tribulations. Plamadeala, in this case, is

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Deborah Reed-Danahay. “Autoethnography,” in *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, Victor Jupp, ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2006), pp. 15-16.

<sup>12</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala] Dragos Seuleanu, Carmen Dumitriu Seuleanu and Irineu Duvlea, eds. (Bucharest: Editura CUM, 1999), p. 259.

no exception. This work speaks of some of this theologian's major trials during the formative years of his life, which, as he himself suggested, helped shape the theological work he later produced in his academic career.

## Chapter 1 Bessarabia and the refuge across the Prut River

### *Bessarabia*

I begin the biography of Antonie Plamadeala with the theologian's homeland—Bessarabia, or *Basarabia*, as some Romanians and Moldovans refer to the land between the rivers Prut<sup>13</sup> and Nistru,<sup>14</sup> and which is identified on the modern world map as the Republic of Moldova. It is a well-known fact that a person's early childhood experiences shape and even define one's character and, therefore, may help explain one's choices and actions later in life. In his case, however, the reference to Bessarabia in speaking about Plamadeala's life and theological works may also have a slight nationalistic and even political connotation for some. His Bessarabian origins in the context of the greater Romanian culture and society may have some symbolic significance in support of the unity and continuity of the Romanians and the people who claim Romanian origins in nowadays Republic of Moldova.

Several important facts concerning Bessarabia and its relation to Romania must be provided herein in order to explain the symbolic connection between Moldova and Romania that the theologian may represent to some, acknowledging that the telling of the history of Bessarabia has rarely ever been free from some inherent bias, as it has been told mostly by those who either claim<sup>15</sup> or argue<sup>16</sup> for its Romanian and, respectively, Russian origins and affinity. The

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<sup>13</sup> River at the border between the Republic of Moldova and Romania.

<sup>14</sup> River at the border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The river lies also at the border between Transnistria, a de facto state and the rest of Moldova.

<sup>15</sup> Among scholarly writings dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, for Romania's lack of "historic right" to Bessarabia, see for example *Romanian Occupation in Bessarabia: Documents. Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920)*. *Bessarabia* (Paris: Imprimerie Lahure, 1920); Pavel Nikolaevich Miliukov. *The Case for Bessarabia: A Collection of Documents on the Rumanian Occupation* (London: Russian Liberation Committee, 1919). For Romania's "historic right" to Bessarabia, see for example Zamfir C. Arbure. *Basarabia in Secolul XIX* (Bessarabia in the 19th Century) (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carolod Gobol, 1898).

<sup>16</sup> Among more recent academic works, for Romania's "historic right" to Bessarabia, see for example Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu. *Batalia diplomatica pentru Basarabia, 1918-1940* [The Diplomatic Battle for Bessarabia, 1918-1940] (Iasi: Institutul European, 1991) and *Batalia pentru Basarabia, 1941-1944* [The Battle for Bessarabia, 1941-1944], Gheorghe Buzatu, ed. (Bucharest: Editura Mica Valahie, 2010). For more recent literature concerning the Russian origins of Bessarabia, see for example: Andrei Kushko, Victor Taki and Oleg Grom. *Бессарабия в составе Российской империи (1812—1917)* [Bessarabia as part of the Russian Empire (1812-1917)] (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obrazovanie, 2012); N. B. Abacumova-Zabunova. *Русское население городов Бессарабии XIX века* [Russian population of the Bessarabian cities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century] (Chisinau: Business Elita, 2012). For Soviet-time literature concerning the Russian origins of Bessarabia, see for example: Ilya Grigorevich Budak and Iachim Grosul. *Очерки истории народного хозяйства Бессарабии (1812-1861)* [Essays on the history of the national economy of Bessarabia (1812-1861)] (Chisinau: Cartea Moldoveneasca, 1967); Ion Osadchenko. *Литературные связи Молдавии и России в XIX веке* [Literary links between Moldova and Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century] (Chisinau: Literatura Artistica, 1983).

rationality behind both arguments does have some legitimacy, hence providing fertile ground for ongoing disputes on this topic. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone, Bessarabia belonged to three distinct geopolitical entities: the Russian Empire (1812-1918), the Romanian Kingdom (1918-1944)<sup>17</sup> and the Soviet Union (1944-1991). Moreover, after the Soviet Union's fall in 1991, Bessarabia became part of what is now the Republic of Moldova, with the exception of its most southern region and a small area in its northern part, which remained part of modern-day Ukraine.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the people residing in this region have, historically, claimed the identity of, or were identified by, that of the greater governing territorial body to which they belonged, leaving the latest governing structure, the Republic of Moldova, with the perennial struggle to define itself as a nation state.<sup>19</sup>

But perhaps the largest problem Moldova is currently facing regarding its identity is that it seeks an ethnic 19<sup>th</sup> century type of understanding as opposed to a civic nation type. Whereas in the ethnic model, the predominant ethnic group provides the identity of the state, in the civic nation model it is the commitment to institutions that defines the country's identity regardless of the ethnic group to which it belongs. Things are further complicated by the invention of the Moldovan identity separate from the Romanian one during the Soviet era, under Moscow's influence. This sought to differentiate the Romanian-speaking majority within Bessarabia under

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<sup>17</sup> Bessarabian province was ceded to the Soviet Union in 1940 and regained in 1941. During years 1940-1941, the Soviet Union adopted a rather aggressive sovietization campaign in order to incorporate the newly acquired territory within the Soviet system. More than 100,000 Bessarabians, mostly of Romanian origins, were relocated to other regions of the USSR. Within the region, most industrial plants were nationalized and projects to nationalize its agricultural land were adopted. "Moldovan" in *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. James S. Olson, Lee Brigance Pappas and Nicholas C. J. Pappas, eds. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 483. For a brief history of Bessarabia, see, for example Trevor Waters. "Russian peacekeeping in Moldova: Source of stability or neo-imperialist threat?" in *Regional Peacekeepers: The Paradox of Russian Peacekeeping*, John Mackinlay and Peter Cross, eds. (New York: United Nations University, 2013), pp. 132-156; Charles King, "Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism" in *Slavic Review*, 1994, Vol. 53, No. 2, pp. 345-368. For a comprehensive history of Moldova, see Charles King. *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institute Press, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> With the formation of the Moldovan Socialist Republic, Bessarabia was made part of the Moldovan Socialist Republic, with its most southern part being granted to the Ukrainian Socialist Republic. The newly formed Moldovan socialist state would receive from Ukraine a relatively large portion of land on the eastern bank of river Dniester (Dnestr), which separates modern day Moldova and Ukraine. This territory is known as Transnistria, in English, Trasdniestria or in Russian, *pridnestrov'ye*—"land on the Dniester/Dnestr river." Trevor Waters. "Russian peacekeeping in Moldova: Source of stability or neo-imperialist threat?" in *Regional Peacekeepers: The Paradox of Russian Peacekeeping*, John Mackinlay and Peter Cross, eds. (New York: United Nations University Press, 2013), p. 133.

<sup>19</sup> For a brief summary of Moldova's language policies, see for example Jeffrey Chinn. "The Politics of Language in Moldova" in *Demokratizatsiya* Nr. 2, Spring 1993; and Tom J. Hegarty. "The Politics of Language in Moldova" in *Languages, Ethnicity and the State: Minority languages in Eastern Europe post 1989*, Vol 2, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 123-154.



the Soviet rule from the Romanians within the neighboring Romanian state, of which Bessarabia was part during the interwar period. As a result, even when applying the ethnic nation model, the people of the Republic of Moldova have not yet reached a consensus on who they are or what language they speak. Whereas some claim they are Moldovans and speak the Moldovan language, others claim they are Romanian and they speak Romanian.

Returning back to Plamadeala, after this brief yet much needed historical detour, Plamadeala's Bessarabian roots are significant in the context of what Bessarabia, and hence, modern-day Republic of Moldova, may represent to some modern-day Romanians and Moldovans of Romanian origins. Described by some as a prominent advocate of the Romanian culture and Romanian Orthodox spirituality, and as a refined Romanian theologian and profound thinker,<sup>20</sup> as evident in his close to 40 books<sup>21</sup> and hundreds of academic articles, book reviews,

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<sup>20</sup> See for example Casian Craciun. "Mitropolitul Antonie, Ctitor de Oameni" [Metropolitan Antonie, Founder of People] in *Mitropolitul Antonie al Ardealului Rugul Aprins Constiintei Neamului* [Metropolitan Antonie of Ardeal, The Burning Bush of the Nation's Consciousness] (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cartii de Stiinta, 2012), pp. 52-58; and Monahia Cristina Chicernea. "Un Om Care a Crescut Odata cu Biserica Neamului Sau" [A Human who Grew at the Same Time as His Church] in *Mitropolitul Antonie al Ardealului Rugul Aprins Constiintei Neamului* [Metropolitan Antonie of Ardeal, The Burning Bush of the Nation's Consciousness] Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cartii de Stiinta, 2012), pp. 140-149.

<sup>21</sup> Some of his most known books include: 1) *Trei Ceasuri in Iad* (Three Hours in Hell), novel (Bucharest: Eminescu Publishing House, 1970), 303 pp. The book was translated in Bulgarian in 1972, by publishing house Narodnaia Cultura; Bulgarian title: *Tri Ceasa v Ada*. 2) *Biserica slujitoare in Sfanta Scriptura, Sfanta Traditie si in Teologia Contemporana*, (The Serving Church in the Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and in the Contemporary Theology), Bucharest, 1972, 344 pp.; 3) *Hans Kung si Declaratia "Mysterium Ecclesiae"* (Hans Kung and the Declaration "Mysterium Ecclesiae"), Bucharest, 1974, 67 pp.; 4) *Clerici Ortodocsi, Ctitori de Limba si Cultura Romaneasca* (Orthodox Clerics, Founders of the Romanian Language and Culture), Bucharest, 1977, 69 pp.; 5) *Ca toti sa Fie Una* (So that All Become One), Bucharest, 1979, 596 pp.; 6) *Biserica Ortodoxa Romana, in Trecut si Astazi* (Romanian Orthodox Church, in the Past and Now), Bucharest, 1979, published in Romanian, English and French; 7) *Dasclii de Cuget si Simtire Romaneasca* (Teachers of Romanian Thought and Feeling), Bucharest, 1981, 547 pp.; 8) *Nume si Fapte in Istoria Culturii Romanesti* (Names and Accomplishments in the History of the Romanian Culture), Bucharest, 1983, 120 pp.; 9) *Spiritualitate si Istorie la Intorsatura Carpatilor* (Spirituality and History at the Turn of the Carpathian Mountains), Buzau, 1983, vol. 1., 420 pp. and vol. 2., 412 pp.; 10) *Traditie si Libertate in Spiritualitatea Ortodoxa* (Tradition and Freedom in the Orthodox Spirituality), Sibiu, 1983, 410 pp.; 11) *Vocatie si Misiune Crestina in Vremea Noastra* (Christian Vocation and Mission in Our Times), Sibiu, 1984, 462 pp.; 12) *Pagini Dintr-o Arhiva Inedita. Documente Literare* (Pages from a Unique Archive. Literary Documents) (Bucharest: Publishing House Minerva, 1984), 435 pp.; 13) *Lazar Leon Asachi in Cultura Romaneasca* (Lazar Leon Asachi in the Romanian Culture), Sibiu, 1985, 524 pp.; 14) *Biserica Slujitoare* (The Serving Church), Sibiu, 1986, 325 pp.; 15) *Lupta Impotriva Deznationalizarii Romanilor din Transilvania in Timpul Dualismului Austro-ungar, in Vremea lui Miron Romanul (1874-1889), Dupa Acte, Documente si Corespondente Inedite* (The Fight Against the Denationalization of Romanians in Transylvania During the Austro-Hungarian Dualist [period], During the Time of Miron Romanul (1874-1889), Based on Unpublished Files, Documents and Letters), Sibiu, 1986, 358 pp.; 16) *Romanii din Transilvania sub Teroarea Regimului Dualist Austro-Ungar (1867-1918)* (Romanians from Transylvania Under the Terror of the Dualist Austro-Hungarian Regime (1867-1918), Sibiu, 1986, 546 pp.; 17) *Calendar de Inima Romaneasca* (Calendar of the Romanian Heart), Sibiu, 1988; 18) *Talcuri Noi la Texte Vechi, Predici* (New Explanations of Old Texts. Sermons), Sibiu, 1989, 479 pp.; 19) *Cuvinte la Zile Mari* (Words for Grand Days), Sibiu, 1989, 365 pp.; 20) *Preotul la Biserica, in Lume, Acasa* (The Priest at the Church, in the World and at Home), Sibiu, 1996. For a complete list of works written by Antonie Plamadeala, see, for example, Paul

sermons and essays, Plamadeala's Bessarabian roots may offer a symbolic cultural and spiritual link between the two countries. This chapter intends to provide a succinct account about his early years in this former Romanian province and about his first years as a refugee in what is now Romania.

### *Stolniceni-Plamadeala's native village*

"I am coming from a region of the country which is no longer part of the Romanian state," Plamadeala wrote sometimes after the year 1990, in an autobiographical note, possibly delivered as a speech, as one may conclude from the way it addresses its audience via the usage of second person pronouns. "I was born in Bessarabia, in the village Stolniceni, Lapusna (now [located] in the district of Hincesti of the Republic of Moldova), on 17 November 1926. There I spent my childhood, next to my five brothers, and there I finished primary school."<sup>22</sup> Having grown up only two kilometers from Stolniceni, I dare to claim some innate authority in arguing that Stolniceni's serenity and simplicity may have nurtured in the young Plamadeala the same two traits, which he later exhibited in his theological writings. These same characteristics are also evident in his later recollections about Stolniceni:

After I learned to read, I discovered in the church's bell tower a library with about five bookshelves. That was popular literature, thin books which I considered as extraordinary treasures. My father, the church's deacon, was also the librarian. There, I read with tears Creanga<sup>23</sup> and Ispirescu's<sup>24</sup> tales and many more. I was happy in the church bell tower. My father was leaving me there alone when he was not finding anything for me to do around the household and my biggest joy was to go through as many books [as I could] and choose alone the ones to read at home, even though at home I did not have a lot of free time. There was

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Brusanowski. "Coordonate Biografice ale Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala" (Biographical coordinates of Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala) in *Teologie, Slujire, Ecumenism* (Theology, Service, Ecumenism) (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Eparhiale, 1996), pp. 30-60.

<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Buda and Maica Anastasia. *Mitropolitul Antonie al Ardealului: Rugul Aprins al Constiintei Neamului* (Cluj Napoca: Casa Cartii de Stiinta, 2012), p. 235.

<sup>23</sup> Ion Creanga (1837-1889) was a Romanian story-teller, from the village of Humulesti, Neamt. As part of the Junimea (Youth) society, he wrote numerous tales and stories, such as *Amintiri din Copilarie* (Childhood Reminiscences), *Lupul Pacalit de Vulpe* [The Wolf Fooled by the Fox], and *Convorbiri Literare* (Literary Conversations). He is known for his 'earthy' language, humorous writing style, the usage of proverbs and expressions in his prose, the quality of which places him next to that of the writings of Andersen, the Grimm brothers, and Charles Perrault. His works describe village life and traditions, documenting the rural culture and verbal communication in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Moldova (North Eastern region of modern-day Romania). See "Ion Creanga" in *Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature*, Horatio Smith, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press. Place of publication: New York: 1947), p. 179; and Charles M. Carlton. "Ion Creanga" in *Encyclopedia of Eastern Europe: From the Congress of Vienna to the Fall of Communism*. Richard Frucht, ed. (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 165.

<sup>24</sup> Petre Ispirescu (1830-1887) is a famous Romanian writer of numerous fairy tales and stories for children. For a list of his most known fairy tales, see for example Petre Ispirescu. *Basmele Romanilor* [The Romanians' Fairy Tales] (eLiteratura: 2013).

always something to do [at home]. I was the babysitter of all my younger brothers whom I had to wash and rock. Only I know how many times they fell [from the crib] while rocking them... The more I would rock them, the harder they would cry [and] with more desperation. ... It was hard, as I was also little. ... I lived in two worlds, that of the village and that of the books, one more beautiful than the other.<sup>25</sup>

At age eleven, Plamadeala entered the Theological Seminary “Gabriil Banulescu Bodoni” in the capital city of Chisinau, named after the leader of the archbishopric seat in Bessarabia from 1813 to 1821, who was appointed to that see shortly after the annexation of this territory by the Russian Empire (1812).<sup>26</sup> “It happened, however, that in 1940 Bessarabia was occupied by the Soviet troops,” Plamadeala wrote in that same autobiographical note, and “the Seminary’s courses were suspended.”<sup>27</sup> As a result, he enrolled in the Chisinau Pedagogical School where he completed the first year of studies. In 1941, when Bessarabia was annexed by the Romanian Kingdom,<sup>28</sup> Plamadeala reenrolled at the Theological Seminary in Chisinau. However, because of the Soviet invasion of Bessarabia in 1944, he and his family sought out refuge in Isalnita,<sup>29</sup> a village next to the city of Craiova, in southern Romania.<sup>30</sup> The following fall, he enrolled at the Seminar “Nifon Mitropolitul” [Metropolitan Nifon],<sup>31</sup> in Bucharest, from which he graduated in 1945 with honors.<sup>32</sup>

The eight years following Plamadeala’s admission at the Chisinau Theological Seminary were turbulent, to say the least, for both him and his family. The Plamadealas faced numerous trials and hardships, as well as poverty, in adjusting to the new life in the Romanian village of Isalnita and later in Bucharest. Mihai Plamadeala, the theologian’s brother, wrote in his book

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<sup>25</sup> Nicholas Buda and Maica Anastasia. *Mitropolitul Antonie al Ardealului: Rugul Aprins al Constiintei Neamului*, p. 15. This passage, as any other translated passages provided in this thesis, was translated from Romanian by the author of this thesis. See original quote in Antonie Plamadeala, *Basarabia* (Sibiu: Editura Eparhiala Sibiu, 2002), pp. 48-49.

<sup>26</sup> Mircea Pacurariu. “Romanian Christianity” in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*. Ken Parry, ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 198.

<sup>27</sup> Nicholas Buda and Maica Anastasia. *Mitropolitul Antonie al Ardealului: Rugul Aprins Al Constiintei Neamului* (Cluj Napoca: Casa Cartii de Stiinta, 2012), pp. 235-236.

<sup>28</sup> From 1940-1941, Bessarabia was part of the Soviet Union. In 1941, it was annexed by the Romanian Kingdom, until 1944, when it was ceded to the Soviet Union.

<sup>29</sup> Romanian village located in the South-Western part of the country.

<sup>30</sup> Romanian city of approximately 317,368 people (1990) located in the Wallachia region, near river Jiu. It is known for its production of mining equipment and locomotives, museums with artifacts and relics dating from the prehistoric and Roman era, and its 17<sup>th</sup> century St. Demetrius Church. The city was the capital of Oltenia in 1492 and fully burned by the Turks in 1802. “Craiova” in *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, online 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Named after Nifon Sevastias, former Romanian bishop of Ramnic, who was appointed Metrpolitian in 1859. Lucian N. Leustean. “The Romanian Orthodox Church” in *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe*. Lucian N. Leustean, ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> Nicholas Buda and Maica Anastasia. *Mitropolitul Antonie al Ardealului: Rugul Aprins Al Constiintei Neamului* (Cluj Napoca: Casa Cartii de Stiinta, 2012), pp. 235-236.

*Refugiul: Deznadejde si Speranta* (The Refuge: Hopelessness and Hope) about their life during these years. The story told in this autobiographical account is mostly about the other seven members of the family, Antonie Plamadeala being mentioned only sparingly in some of the pages, as he was the oldest son and, at that time, away from the rest of the family, enrolled in the Seminary in Bucharest. Mihai Plamadeala narrates the family's saga of crossing the Prut River in an open horse-drawn carriage, filled with small children and even an infant, driven by the mother, as the father was on the war front, enrolled in the Romanian Army as an "uninstructed"<sup>33</sup> soldier. The eighteen-year old Leonida, Antonie Plamadeala's given name prior to his becoming a monk, was awaiting them at the train station in the city of Husi.<sup>34</sup>

Among the other stories told here, *Refugiul: Deznadejde si Speranta* speaks about the family's witnessing of the April 4, 1944 American bombings of Bucharest,<sup>35</sup> of their quest for food and shelter, about their father's ardent ambition to ensure that his children would pursue an education despite the difficulties they faced. The book also reveals the admirable strength of Plamadeala's mother, who even challenged a Romanian customs officer to allow her to pass a bridge over the Prut River, the bridge being reserved for army personnel only, by vociferously threatening him that if she returned back to her village that night her five children in her horse-driven carriage would have become "Bolsheviks."<sup>36</sup> It also brings to light the innocence of her children, Plamadeala's younger brothers, whose lives were affected, like anyone else's life at that time, by war. But most importantly, the book helps understand how Plamadeala's insightful and profound mind, as evident in his writings, may have been nurtured by his experiences as a young adult.

Insight and depth are rarely obtained by default, as they often require, at minimum, some element of discomfort, physical and emotional. Most of the times, insight and depth are products of crises of some sort, to which a human responds in a manner that challenges his or her previous

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 96.

<sup>34</sup> City in the county of Vaslui, located in the Eastern part of Romania, on the border with the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>35</sup> The attacks were carried out by American heavy bombers, targeting marshaling yards in Bucharest. As a result of these attacks, roughly 1200 people died. Civilians on the streets, having had experienced only an hour and a half earlier a practice alarm, did not respond accordingly to the attacks. In consequence, some failed to seek shelter. Approximately half of those who died were refugees. Ronald Schaffer. *Wings of Judgment: American Bombing in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 56.

<sup>36</sup> Mihai Plamadeala. *Refugiul. Deznadejde si Speranta* [Refuge. Hopelessness and Hope] (Braila: Editura Istros, 2012), p. 101.

assumptions and preconceptions about a given subject, idea or reality. About the crisis of his refuge Plamadeala wrote the following in his autobiographical book *Basarabia*:

From Stolniceni, I left in search for refuge, from those who were coming to occupy it forty-seven years ago. I left crying. That is because I loved my village, with its natural springs, hills, rains, with its songs and people. Heading towards Leuseni<sup>37</sup> and from there towards the protective land, I sprinkled the road with tears, in lieu of the stones from the fairy tale, so that I would find the road back and to wipe them one after another!<sup>38</sup>

Mihai Plamadeala's book helps one understand his brother's experience as a refugee, as described in his recollections of this event. It also speaks indirectly about the family who raised him. Under difficult circumstances,<sup>39</sup> the oldest son's continuation of his studies despite the father's being gone at times to war and the mother being left alone to take care of the other five children, may speak favorably about this family's high appreciation for education.

#### *The order of arrest*

In a Securitate<sup>40</sup> dossier dating from 1948, Plamadeala was listed along with twenty-nine other students,<sup>41</sup> as pending arrest orders for alleged ties to the fascist Iron Guard or Legionary Movement. His arrest order reached his family in Bucharest roughly two years later, on January 11, 1950, while Antonie Plamadeala was a monk at the Prislop Monastery in Transylvania. By then, Plamadeala was on the run from the Securitate for two years. The receipt of this arrest order was a turning point in the life of his family for two main reasons. First, by notifying

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<sup>37</sup> Bessarabian city at the frontier with Romania.

<sup>38</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia* (Sibiu: Tipografia Eparhiala Sibiu, 203), pp. 52-53.

<sup>39</sup> Mihai Plamadeala writes the following in his *Refugiul. Deznadejde si Speranta*: "In 1944-1945, we lived through very hard times. We were gathering dried weeds from the field that I was burning to warm us up a little, and at night all five of us, brothers, along with the parents, we were sleeping in our only bed" (p. 140). In another instance, he writes: "We were struggling greatly. We were naked, at least I was in a pitiful situation. I got to the point that I could not get out of the house because I was that unclothed" (p. 139).

<sup>40</sup> Established in 1907, this organization was known until 1948 as the *Siguranta*. Roland Clark. *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*, unpublished doctoral thesis defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, p. 14. The establishment of the secret police in Romania came in response to the peasant revolt which took place in Romania in 1917. Its main duties included the monitoring of the activities of the foreign citizens visiting Romania and collecting intelligence information in service of national interests. Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> The other twenty-nine students were: Sultana Petre, Bordasiu Nicolae, Vaman Constantin, Braga Roman, Brasov Nita, Vaduva Dumitru, Toader Petre, Pavel St. Ion, Chitu Vasile, Manculescu Ion, Miclescu Feliciu, Vila Petre, Ionescu Aurelian, Popescu Dumitru, Munteanu Paul, Popescu I, Petre, Badescu Mihai, Stoenescu Constantin, Popescu N-Gheorghe-Ogratin, Nistor Constantin, Tudor Constantin, Serban Gheorghe, Balea Traian-Nerva, Brandus Vasile, Clinciu Gheorghe, Macarei Dionisie, Stroe Ion, Caltea Corneliu and Cusa I. George. The list of students was finalized on 14 January 1949. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 2.

Plamadeala of the existence of the order, his family helped him escape the arrest for several more years and possibly saved his life. Secondly, as Mihai Plamadeala confirms, it led to the death of his younger brother, Gheorghe, as we will see below.

The circumstances in which the arrest order reached the Plamadealas have been discussed at great length by the theologian's brother, Mihai, in his *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala: Detalii Biografice* (Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala: Biographical details). According to the author, the arrest order was brought by Alexandru Prescornitoiu, the district policeman. The mother, Elizabeta, and her five children: Gheorghe (18 years old), Valeriu (16 years old), Mihai (14 years old), Alexei (11 years old) and Nicolae (6 years old) were all in the only room of the house at that time, Mihai narrates, a room "that was heated to some extent because of the fire stove on which the mother was preparing food."<sup>42</sup> "I think he [the policeman] was profoundly impressed by the utter poverty in which we lived."<sup>43</sup> After a private discussion with his father, Vasile, Prescornitoiu informed Vasile that he would return within a week to arrest Leonida, insinuating, as the theologian's brother suggests in his recollections of that day that the entire family should act as if their meeting had never occurred. The extra week granted by Prescornitoiu allowed for sufficient time for the family to warn Leonida of the arrest awaiting him and the necessity for him to hide from Securitate.

Mihai Plamadeala describes this very incident as decisive, fateful and even almost an act of providence in respect to Plamadeala's life; he refers to Prescornitoiu as the "humane"<sup>44</sup> policeman in a time when one's humanity was often compromised by one's inherent instinct for survival. That week granted by the "humane"<sup>45</sup> police officer allowed for Gheorghe, the second oldest of the brothers, to reach Prislop and warn Leonida of the arrest order. As a result of it, Plamadeala managed to leave for Bucharest, where the chances of his being found by the Securitate were lower than the ones in a rural setting. Gheorghe's roughly 400-kilometer trip in the cold winter, dressed in only "two sweaters torn in the elbows, a piece of clothing and a scarf"<sup>46</sup> eventually cost him his life, according to the account of Mihai Plamadeala. Shortly after his return home, from Bucharest, where he left Antonie, Gheorghe, as Mihai discusses in his

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<sup>42</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

book, caught pneumonia and died of tuberculosis in the fall of 1951.<sup>47</sup>

Throughout his entire life Antonie Plamadeala never knew that Gheorghe fell ill shortly after he returned from the trip he made to warn him of his arrest order. This was the family's way of protecting their son from unnecessary "guilt,"<sup>48</sup> they thought, as he was facing at that time trials of his own, while on the run from the Securitate and later in prison. Gheorghe died as the family's "martyr,"<sup>49</sup> Mihai Plamadeala admits. However, "if he [Antonie] were to be arrested in that period of cruel repression, there is no way to tell whether or not he would have survived, had he passed through the sinister prisons, real camps for the extermination of intellectuals, from Aiud, Gherla, Targu Ocna,<sup>50</sup> to Pitesti."<sup>51</sup> Plamadeala's colleagues Constantin Nistor and Nita Brasov, who were tried in the same Securitate dossier as Plamadeala was, died as a result of the torture they received in the prison Targu Ocna<sup>52</sup> during interrogations.<sup>53</sup> Gheorghe saved Antonie's life and without Gheorghe's "sacrifice"<sup>54</sup> none of Plamadeala's works and cultural and theological contribution to the Romanian society and culture would have been possible, Mihai Plamadeala suggests.<sup>55</sup> The experience of loss, deprivation and suffering was only commencing in the life of Plamadeala, easily described, as this thesis will show, as a multitude of crises

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> In a 1955 report issued by the Free Europe Committee about forced labor in Romania, the Aiud prison was described as "one of the largest prisons [from Romania], sometimes used as a distribution center; inmates working in prison workshops"; Gherla, as filled with "inmates kulaks, students and political prisoners; employed on public works; Targu Ocna, as filled with "prison inmates working in salt mines"; Pitesti, as a "prison for political prisoners and camp for women; also reportedly students." See Richard Carlton, ed. *Forced Labor in the "People's Democracies* (New York: Free Europe Committee, 1955), pp. 173-178. Furthermore, the Pitesti prison is notoriously known for its re-education experiment during this period. This experiment sought, through its numerous diabolic techniques to recreate from those who were imprisoned personas that exhibited an identity opposite of that which they had prior to their entry into the prison, a personality that would mimic and perpetuate the ways and attitudes of the prison abusers. See Deletant, Dennis. *Ceausescu and the Securitate. Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: 1995), pp. 29-40. For a detailed account about the reeducation experiment in Pitesti, see, for example, Mircea Stanescu. "Reeducarea de la Pitesti" [Reeducation at Pitesti] in *Reeducarea in Romania Comunista (1945-1952)* [Reeducation in Communist Romania (1945-1952)] (Bucharest: Polirom, 2010), pp. 93-271.

<sup>51</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> Prison built in 1850 by Grigore Alexandru Ghica (1849-1856). Luminita Eleni Merei. "The Organization of Prisons in the Romanian Principalities (1831-1862)" in *Contemporary Reading in Law and Social Justice*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, July 1, 2012, pp. 653-655. Grigore Ghica was a totalitarian ruler with tendency for innovation and socio-economic reforms. In 1827 he put together a committee seeking to implement administrative reforms. The divisive nature of his ruling style, however, led to great discord with the economic and political elite, also known by its Romanian term-*boieri*. Keith M. Hitchins. *The Romanians, 1774-1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 156.

<sup>53</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*.

requesting from the one experiencing them a great deal of inner strength to confront them with dignity and the remote possibility of embracing, as a result of them, some credible illusion of hope and ultimate purpose.



## Chapter 2 Antonie Plamadeala and the Legionary Movement

### *A brief history of the Legionary movement*

Securitate's interest in Plamadeala, and hence, the reason behind the respective arrest order, may have arose out of his apparent ties to the Iron Guard or the Legionary Movement, an allegation which was revealed to the police in students' interrogations carried out when the first wave of arrests occurred. First arrests began in July 1948.<sup>56</sup> The terms 'Iron Guard' and the 'Legionary movement' are often employed interchangeably<sup>57</sup> to refer to the Romanian nationalistic organization, anti-Semitic and anti-Communist in rhetoric and activity, which was founded in 1927 by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.<sup>58</sup> Initially, this organization was called the Legion of the Archangel Michael<sup>59</sup> and was built on the efforts of ultra-nationalist Romanian youth aiming to combine "Christian mysticism with a cult of death"<sup>60</sup> in order to remove the country's Jewish population from the country's economic and political affairs. The organization placed the Christian Orthodox faith at the core of Romanian nationalism.<sup>61</sup> In their propaganda, the members of this Legion, also referred to as Legionaries (or *Legionari*, in Romanian), identified

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<sup>56</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 1, p. 17. By 11 February 1949, 20 or the 30 students were already arrested and incarcerated at Jilava prison. Their names were: Vaman Constantin, Braga Roman, Brasov Nita, Vaduva Dumitru, Toader Petre, Pavel St. Ionel, Manciulescu Ioan, Miculescu Feliciu, Munteanu Pavel, Popescu Petre, Badescu Mihai, Stoenescu Constantin, Tudor Constantin, Brandus Vasile, Clinciu Gheorghe, Macarei Dionisie, Stroia Ioan and Cusai Gheorghe. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 47.

<sup>57</sup> The Iron Guard was initially a "youth wing" brought in within the Legion of the Archangel Michael in 1930 by the Legion's founder, Corneliu Codreanu. As a result of this acquisition, Codreanu's organization became widely known by this name. Nicholas Atkin, Michael Biddis and Frank Tallett. *The Wiley-Blackwell Dictionary of Modern European History since 1789* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 83; Irina Livezeanu. "Fascists and conservatives in Romania: two generations of nationalists" in *Fascists and Conservatives: The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth Century Europe*, Martin Blinkhorn, ed. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 230-231.

<sup>58</sup> Roland Clark, "European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)," unpublished doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, p. 7. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (1899-1938), also known as the Captain, was also the founder of the National Christian Defense League (LANC). Like the Legion, LANC was anti-Semitic for its opposition against the newly adopted constitution's grant of equal rights to Jews. A terrorist organization, the Legion was behind the assassination of Premier Ion Duca, in 1933, ex-Premier Nicolae Iorga, murdered in 1940, and of Virgil Madgearu. Nicholas Atkin, Michael Biddis and Frank Tallett. *The Wiley-Blackwell Dictionary of Modern European History since 1789* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 83; Conan Fisher. *Europe between Democracy and Dictatorship, 1900-1945* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 265; Walter M. Bacon. "National Legionary State" in *Encyclopedia of Eastern Europe: From the Congress of Vienna to the Fall of Communism*, Richard Frucht, ed. (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 528.

<sup>59</sup> Nicholas Atkin, Michael Biddis and Frank Tallett. *The Wiley-Blackwell Dictionary of Modern European History since 1789* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 82-83.

<sup>60</sup> Jack R. Fischel. *The Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 73.

<sup>61</sup> Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu. *Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 121.

the Jews as the reason behind all the problems of Romania's society.<sup>62</sup>

The Legion thrived in the 1930s<sup>63</sup> until 1938, when it underwent government repression. For the following two years, it operated as an underground enterprise until 1940,<sup>64</sup> when it came to power together with General Ion Antonescu,<sup>65</sup> as a result of King Carol II's abdication.<sup>66</sup> From September 1940 until January 1941, Romania was officially a national legionary state. The Legion's leader, Horia Sima (1903/1908-1993), originating from Banat, was deputy prime minister.<sup>67</sup> The respective alliance was short lived. After five months, Antonescu eradicated the organization in response to a failed attempt from the Legion's part to overthrow the government.<sup>68</sup> Once again an underground organization, with many of its former members incarcerated, the Legion experienced a revival attempt after the establishment of the Communist regime in 1946. With the establishment of the Communist regime, the Legion embraced the language, ideals and organizational methods of its predecessor organization, while leaving behind its anti-Semitic rhetoric for a greater emphasis on fighting against the Communist

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<sup>62</sup> Jack R. Fischel. *The Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 73.

<sup>63</sup> Irina Livezeanu. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 296.

<sup>64</sup> Corneliu Codreanu was murdered on 29-30 November 1938, along with thirteen other Legionaries. Romanian King Carol II ordered their assassinations. Codreanu was sprinkled with acid and buried in the Jilava prison, with cement being poured on the grave. Constantin Iordachi. "Charisma, Religion and Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael" in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), p. 39.

<sup>65</sup> Roland Clark. *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*, unpublished doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, pp. 7-9.

<sup>66</sup> In this period, Romania was obliged to give up northern Transylvania to Hungary. Furthermore, southern Dobruja was given to Bulgaria, with Bukovina and Bessarabia ceded to the Soviet Union. *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Conflict and Conflict Resolution, 1945-1996*, John E. Jessup, ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 630; Constantin Iordachi. "Charisma, Religion and Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael" in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), pp. 40-41. King Carol II abandoned his rights to the throne in order to marry Elena Lupescu, who was a divorcee. Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu. *Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 121.

<sup>67</sup> Walter M. Bacon. "National Legionary State" in *Encyclopedia of Eastern Europe: From the Congress of Vienna to the Fall of Communism*, Richard Frucht, ed. (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 528; E. Garrison Walters. *The Other Europe: Eastern Europe to 1945* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), p. 301; Constantin Iordachi. "Charisma, Religion and Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael" in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), p. 39.

<sup>68</sup> This event is referred to as the 1941 Legionary rebellion. It occurred on 21-23 January, 1941. Constantin Iordachi. "Charisma, Religion and Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael" in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), p. 40.

regime.<sup>69</sup>

### *Students' accusations of ties to the Legionary movement*

Returning to Plamadeala and his suspected ties to the Legion, it is yet to be demonstrated whether or not Securitate's accusations in this respect were valid. These ties, as confirmed in the denunciations by Vaman Constantin,<sup>70</sup> Constantin Nistor<sup>71</sup> and Ioan Pavel,<sup>72</sup> served as the basis for Plamadeala's arrest and incarceration. Seven years later, Nicolae Bordasiu<sup>73</sup> confirmed these students' accusations in reference to Plamadeala in his 13 August 1955 Securitate interrogation. According to them, Plamadeala became a member of the Legion in 1947.<sup>74</sup>

The respective denunciations should not be discarded even if they contradict each other, as in the case of Vaman Constantin, for example. In another Securitate document, in which Plamadeala summarizes the statements provided by the witnesses at his trial, and through which he requests to be freed for lack of evidence against him, Vaman Constantin is cited as having confessed at the Pitesti prison to Roman Braga, witness at Plamadeala's trial,<sup>75</sup> that Constantin was "forced"<sup>76</sup> by those who interrogated him to identify Plamadeala as a Legionary.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, in Vaman's statement provided during Plamadeala's trial session dating from 29 June 1955, Vaman states that "we did not have any member in the Legionary nest with the name

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<sup>69</sup> Roland Clark. *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*, unpublished doctoral thesis defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, pp. 7-9.

<sup>70</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 1, p. 17.

<sup>71</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolit Antonie, Detalii Biografice*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* ACNSAS, IF, dossier 1015, vol. 2, p. 65.

<sup>74</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 1, p. 17. Vaman Constantin declares that Leonida Plamadeala was part of Legionary nest led by Nicolae Bordasiu. Leonida "prepared" Carstoiu Iulian to join the Legionary movement, who was accepted as a "sympathizer [of the movement] in the last week before Easter." See ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 1, p. 17. Vaman Constantin also declares that "prepared students entered the Legionary movement as sympathizers ... At first all the included people were part of the same nest led by Bordasiu Nicolae. From this nest the following people were part of: Ragalie Constantin, 4<sup>th</sup> year; Vaduva Dumitru, 3<sup>rd</sup> year; Plamadeala Leonida, 3<sup>rd</sup> year; Roman Braga, graduated university; Brasov Nita, 3<sup>rd</sup> year; Pavel Ioan, 3<sup>rd</sup> year; Nistor Constantin, 4<sup>th</sup> year; Vaman Constantin, 3<sup>rd</sup> year; Vila Petre, 1<sup>st</sup> year; Ghitescu Ioan, 1<sup>st</sup> year. ... The group was later divided into two smaller nests made of: (1<sup>st</sup> nest) Ragalie Constantin; Vaduva Dumitru; Brasov Nita; Pavel Ioan; Nistor Constantin. (2<sup>nd</sup> nest) Vila Petre; Plamadeala Leonida; Ghitescu Ioan; Roman Braga; Vaman Constantin. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 1, p. 18. See also ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, pp. 28-29.

<sup>75</sup> Roman Braga was present at the hearing which took place on 7 September 1955. At the hearing Braga refused to pledge or swear allegiance to the State because of his beliefs and activity as a monk. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 112. The document with Braga's full declaration is found at ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 69-70.

<sup>76</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 115.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

Plamadeala Leonida.”<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Ion Pavel in his declaration at Plamadeala’s trial<sup>79</sup> admits that he knows Plamadeala by “name” but not by “face” (*dupa figura*) possibly implying that he heard of his existence but never had personal contact with him.

During Plamadeala’s trial, which will be discussed at greater length in chapter 5, Antonie adamantly denied his involvement with that movement.<sup>80</sup> Antonie’s denial, on the one hand, and the students’ denunciations obtained under duress and torture while they were incarcerated, on the other hand, as revealed by the “request for bail” note signed by Plamadeala on 12 October 1955,<sup>81</sup> make it difficult to confirm the legitimacy of the Securitate’s insistence on Plamadeala’s ties to that organization. Certainty lies only in the fact that the files on Plamadeala issued by the Securitate, at least the ones to which I was granted access in May of 2014 (PF, dossier 905, vol. 1-10, and OF, dossier 1015, vol. 1-3), contain no official document that would directly link him to any Legionary-related activity, as is the case, for example, with Vila Petre. In 1941, Vila was “condemned” for the “establishment of the prohibited political association with a Legionary character”<sup>82</sup> and incarcerated at the Vacaresti Prison.<sup>83</sup> In another document, Vila is noted for “having sought out money for legionary propaganda”<sup>84</sup> and for collecting aid for incarcerated Legionaries. He was later freed in 1946, for reasons not disclosed in the respective documents.<sup>85</sup> In my attempt to find any connections of Plamadeala to this movement, I consulted several documents from the Republic of Moldova’s archives on this sensitive topic.<sup>86</sup> The consulted documents, issued by Romania’s *gendermerie*, also known as *jandarmeria*,<sup>87</sup> proved futile in demonstrating Plamadeala’s connections to this organization.<sup>88</sup> In short, the only tangible evidence I was able to find thus far, attesting to this theologian’s connection to this movement, is

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<sup>78</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 76.

<sup>79</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 75.

<sup>80</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, pp. 73, 157.

<sup>81</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 115.

<sup>82</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 9, pp. 98-101.

<sup>83</sup> In a 1955 report issued by the Free Europe Committee about ‘forced labour in Romania,’ Vacaresti Prison is described as a “large prison, distribution center; also for political offenders with long sentences. See Richard Carlton, ed. *Forced Labor in the “People’s Democracies* (New York: Free Europe Committee, 1955), pp. 173-178.

<sup>84</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 9, p. 100.

<sup>85</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 9, pp. 98-101.

<sup>86</sup> I consulted fond 680, vol. 1, stored at the Moldovan National Archives, in Chisinau, Moldova.

<sup>87</sup> *Jandarmeria* was the rural police during the interbellum period. On 23 January 1949, it was replaced by militia (*Directia Generala a Militiei*). Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 21-22.

<sup>88</sup> In a declaration provided by Roman Braga on July 15, 1948 to Securitate, he claims that he had no contact with the Legionary movement at the Chisinau Seminary, where Plamadeala also studied, because General Antonescu was “overseeing and persecuting schools.” ACNSAS, fond 905, vol. 6, p. 62.

the denunciations by the four students mentioned above and by Valeriu Anania.<sup>89</sup> In Anania's 19 August 1959 declaration to Securitate, he claimed that he "heard that he [Plamadeala] was Legionary."<sup>90</sup> In Vaman Constantin's initial declaration to Securitate, Plamadeala appears to have been a legionary in the nest of Villa Petre, and was "preparing"<sup>91</sup> Iulian Carstoiu, sometimes in 1947, to join this organization.<sup>92</sup>

In another Securitate document Plamadeala is listed along with twenty-nine other students<sup>93</sup> from the department of theology and the school of veterinary of the University of Bucharest, all of whom were accused of belonging to a "paramilitary, fascist-legionary organization, that conspired against the internal state security."<sup>94</sup> The events leading up to these arrests will be narrated in the following sections. The discussion of these events is crucial not only in understanding Plamadeala's life, but also of the Romanian culture and society in 1948, a society subject to a rather brusque socio-political and economic transition towards Communism.

### *The establishment of the Communist regime in Romania and its relation to the Orthodox Church*

The Communist regime in Romania was officially established on 30 December 1947 when Law 363 stripped the country of its previous constitutional monarchy and forced the then King Michael to leave his country within a week from the proclamation of Romania as a People's Republic.<sup>95</sup> The country's participation in World War II and the policies adopted by the

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<sup>89</sup> Valeriu Anania (1921-2011), a Romanian Orthodox bishop, was as a teenager a member of the Cluster of Friends, an organization with ties to the fascist Iron Guard. He became a monk in 1942 and six years later received an undergraduate degree in theology from the Faculty of Theology in Sibiu. Released in 1940 from prison for having taken part at a funeral procession of an authority figure of the Iron Guard, he was imprisoned again in 1958 in the Aiud prison. There, he was put in charge to carry out a reeducation experiment in which the targeted prisoners were to be destroyed both physically and psychologically. These prisoners were tortured so that they would profess that they committed imaginary crimes, that in reality they never committed, and embrace Marxist ideology. Released six years later, Anania was sent to the USA by both Romanian communist authority and the Orthodox Church. Ion Mihai Pacepa, who was the head of foreign intelligence service of Romania, confirms that Anania served as Securitate's agent, whose mission in the USA was to gain access to the Romanian diaspora, take over the *Credinta* (Faith) magazine and ensure that its content would have a favorable impact on the foreign opinion in respect to Romania. Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu. *Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 204-205. For information on Anania's work, see Nicolae Turcanu. "Religion, Politics, and Literature in Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania's Work" in *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 10. No. 29 (Summer 2011): 159-181.

<sup>90</sup> See also Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 18.

<sup>91</sup> Legionaries were organized in nests (cuiburi). ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 1, p. 17; and ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p 28.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> See footnote 41 for the complete list of these students.

<sup>94</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 1, p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> Lucian N. Leustean. *Orthodoxy and the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 70.

allied forces in respect to Nazi Germany, Romania's war ally, facilitated the establishment of the Communist regime in Romania. Soviet Union's foreign policies during this period, however, had an even more important role in Romania becoming an ally of Germany.<sup>96</sup> An important part in this respect was played by Bessarabia, the territory annexed by Romania at the end of World War I from Russia. Bessarabia's annexation was never recognized by the Soviet Union, to the point that USSR's interest in Bessarabia was made clear in the secret Soviet-German, Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939.<sup>97</sup> With the ultimatum<sup>98</sup> given by Soviet Union to Romania on 24 June 1940 to cede Bessarabia and northern Bukovina,<sup>99</sup> King Carol II requested Hitler's assistance in preserving his country's borders, an appeal also due to Romania's loss of southern Dobrogea to Bulgaria and northern Transylvania—to Hungary.<sup>100</sup> The request for northern Bukovina was to “be regarded as a compensation, if only an important one, for the immense loss which the Soviet Union and the population of Bessarabia have suffered through the twenty-two years' rule of Romania over Bessarabia.”<sup>101</sup> To note, northern Bukovina was never part of the Tsarist Empire.<sup>102</sup> Entering the War as Germany's ally decided to a certain extent the fate of Romania after its Nazi ally was defeated, granting the Soviet Union open access to this country to manifest its political ambitions.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Romania attained this partnership even though it declared neutrality in 1939. Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 1-4; Romania: Steven Dr. Roper. *The Unfinished Revolution* (Amsterdam: Hardwood Academic, 2000), p. 7. Romania did sign a Nazi-Romania economic agreement in March of 1939. Stephen Fisher-Galati. *Twentieth Century Romania* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 61.

<sup>97</sup> Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 1-4;

<sup>98</sup> The ultimatum began with the following message: “In 1918, Romania, taking advantage of the military weakness of Russia, robbed the Soviet Union by force of a part of her territory, namely, Bessarabia, and thus broke the century old unit of Bessarabia, which is principally occupied by Ukrainians, with the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. The Soviet Union has never reconciled itself to the enforced robbery of Bessarabia and has repeatedly and openly expressed its views to the whole world. At the present moment, when the military weakness of the Soviet Union belongs to the past, as the present international situation demands the quickest solution of unsettled problems to lay the foundation of a permanent peace between the States, the Soviet Union regards it as necessary and as in the interests of the restoration of justice to come to an immediate decision with Romania over the question of the return of Bessarabia.” Anatole G. Mazour. *Russia: Tsarist and Communist* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand, 1962), p. 746.

<sup>99</sup> On 2 August 1940, the Soviet Union occupied from Romania 50,200 square kilometers of land, with roughly 3,700,000 people residing in it. Bertrand D. Wolfe *Six Keys to the Soviet System* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), p. 234.

<sup>100</sup> Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 1-4

<sup>101</sup> Cited in Stephen Fisher-Galati. *Twentieth Century Romania* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 61.

<sup>102</sup> Remi Nadeau. *Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt Divide Europe* (New York: Praeger, 1990), p. 8.

<sup>103</sup> Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 1-4.

Only days after the removal from power of Marshal Antonescu by King Michael I, Soviet troops arrived on 31 August 1944 to Romania's capital, facing a government open to collaborate with the Soviets in defeating the Germans. Within only half a year, the Soviets established a government "to their liking,"<sup>104</sup> with Communists from Moscow and local supporters who once were either incarcerated for their support for Communist ideals or were working "underground"<sup>105</sup> for the Communist cause. Teohari Georgescu<sup>106</sup> was appointed Interior Minister, while Emil Bodnaras,<sup>107</sup> Secretary General to Petru Groza,<sup>108</sup> who became the country's Prime Minister. Both Georgescu and Bodnaras were Communists, the latter being also an officer of the People's Commissariat of Interior Affairs (NKVD),<sup>109</sup> Russian for *Народный комиссариат внутренних дел*.

The establishment of the People's Republic entailed radical transformations in Romania's internal and foreign affairs. Internal political affairs, the economy, the judicial and education systems, as well as the country's main religious denominations, with the Orthodox Church as the leading one, were targeted first. But to do so, a solidified political party made of "Communist elite and dedicated membership"<sup>110</sup> had to be put in place at the expense of eliminating political opposition. In the summer of 1947, the National Peasant and the Liberal parties were excluded from the political arena. In the fall of that year, with the coerced fusion of the Social Democrat Party and of the Communist Party, the Romanian Workers' Party, was established, with

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Georgescu joined the Communist Party in 1929 and served as a Minister of Interior from 1945 to 1952. Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery. *The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 104.

<sup>107</sup> Bodnaras was born in 1901 in Bucovina. In the 1920s, he began working as a spy for the Soviet Union. When captured by Romanian authorities, he managed to escape to the Soviet Union. As he was granted the level of second lieutenant in 1927, he was tried in absentia for desertion, as well as for spying. In 1933, upon his return to Romania, he was incarcerated for five years. He later returned to the Soviet Union and was later brought back to Romania to be in charge of secret intelligence service. Ithiel de Sola, George K. Schueller et al. *Satellite Generals: A Study of Military Elites in the Soviet Sphere* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 87.

<sup>108</sup> Petru Groza was replaced by Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej on 2 June 1952. Ithiel de Sola, George K. Schueller et al. *Satellite Generals: A Study of Military Elites in the Soviet Sphere* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 86.

<sup>109</sup> Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 4.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* 5.

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej<sup>111</sup> (hereinafter Dej) as Secretary General, and Ana Pauker,<sup>112</sup> Vasile Luca<sup>113</sup> and Teohari Georgescu as the party's secretariat's members.<sup>114</sup>

With the signing of the treaty of friendship and mutual assistance with now neighboring Soviet Union on 4 February 1948, the adoption of a new constitution based on the one adopted by USSR in 1936, and the implementation of a judicial system mimicking that of its Soviet ally, the ties between Romania and USSR were being consolidating at a fast pace. This was accompanied by the nationalization of the local economy and agriculture, with detrimental repercussions on the social classes now deemed “enemies of the state,” who were obliged to yield their private property to the State with no recompense. Similarly, the August 1948 Law for Education Reform led to the closing of religiously affiliated institutions and removal of instructors and professors and their replacement by those who were equipped to indoctrinate students with Marxist-Leninist ideology. But it was the Church that played, arguably, a major role in the Communist regime's control and molding of the Romanian society.<sup>115</sup> With it, the government led an intricate relationship, that of persecution and alliance, of control and appeasement. Still, as Lucian Leustean explains in his *Orthodoxy and Cold War*, “religion... suffered” greatly in Romania's newly established order, and the “communists used the Orthodox Church as a political tool” via which the regime attempted to implement its policies and reforms.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> In his policies, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej adhered closely to Stalinist ideals. His domestic policy was that of promoting nationalism which responded to the needs and aspirations of the local Communist elite. His foreign policy reflected full obedience to Moscow. He joined the Communist party in 1932 and led it from 1945-1965. Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu. *Church, State and Democracy in Expanding Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 46; and Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery. *The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 104. For a detailed biography of Dej, see for example, Dumitru Balet. *Un Machiavelli a Balcanilor: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej asa cum a fost* [A Machiavelli of the Balkans: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej the way he was] (Bucuresti: Editura Dacoromana Tempus Dacoromania Comterra, 2010).

<sup>112</sup> Ana Pauker joined the Socialist party in 1916 and in 1919 she became member of the Communist Party. In 1947 she was appointed Foreign Minister and the following year—Secretary of Agriculture. In 1952 she was purged by Dej. Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery. *The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 104. For a detailed biography of Pauker see, for example, Robert Levy. *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>113</sup> Luca joined the Communist party in 1919 and served as Romania's Finance Minister from 1947 until 1952. Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery. *The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 104.

<sup>114</sup> Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 4-6.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-11.

<sup>116</sup> Lucian N. Leustean. *Orthodoxy and the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 117.



The year 1948 is therefore the year when major and rather abrupt transformations were occurring in Romanian society, in the midst of a nation with a small minority of citizens who were not all yet fully discouraged or taken over by fear to revolt against these changes. Terror and countrywide arrests of the regime's opponents or "enemies of the state" were in the early stages. In 1948, there were still many, especially among the young Romanians, whose courage may have been still nurtured by the hope that they were capable to oppose these transformations and eventually bring about an auspicious end, with the support of America and its western allies.

Antonie Plamadeala, in an interview provided to several Romanian journalists about his life, confirms that he was one of those who joined the fight against Communism in those crucial years:

I was among those who wanted to change the regime and was waiting for the Americans to come. I was told that they were coming on the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and they never came! And I was one of those who were betrayed by Churchill who lied about Yalta until his death! .... During this time propaganda was being carried out by a German radio station installed in Austria, that Europe will be free. I don't remember what it was called. It [the radio station] was preaching daily: "Romanian brothers, resist! If not on the 1<sup>st</sup> [of the month], we are coming on the 15<sup>th</sup> [of the month]. The American army is on the verge of departing to liberate you from Communism." Well, these repeated calls that were convincing, attracted us all, all of us who were refugees were also anticommunists; we ran away from the Russians. ... We began to organize ourselves, based on university departments, student dorms, to all make a resistance organization against Communism, so that Communism would enter [in the country] later or not enter at all. We were working with a large number of people, and it was impossible that the Securitate did not infiltrate among us. ... I was sort of a leader of the Bessarabians, at least in the group ... from the Department of Theology of the University of Bucharest. I published then countless issues of the newspaper titled *The Echo of Bessarabia*. ... I was typing it in as many copies as I could, and the following day together with several Bessarabians from Bucharest were distributing many copies or throwing them in public places. Of course, we were fighting for the liberation of Bessarabia, for the Romanian Bessarabia, for the fact that this was temporary, that the Americans were coming, that we would return home, for not losing our hope and so on. I only learned later that, if not all, at least a large number of copies of the newspaper were reaching the Securitate. When they arrested me, it was not hard for them to recognize, based on the style and ideas, that one of those who were writing it was I. As a matter of fact, there were around three of us, not a lot [of us], theology students of Bessarabian origins.<sup>117</sup>

Besides his involvement in the writing of this newspaper there are "other things that cost me six years as a runaway"<sup>118</sup> from the Securitate, the theologian declared in his book *Basarabia*.<sup>119</sup> It is difficult to discern what the theologian was referring to in his reference to those "other things."<sup>120</sup> Securitate files allude to his involvement in the Legionary Movement,

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<sup>117</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala] Dragos Seuleanu, Carmen Dumitriu Seuleanu and Irineu Duvlea, eds. (Bucharest: Editura CUM, 1999), pp. 82-83, 124-125, cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala, Detalii Biografice*, p. 52.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

even though Plamadeala, in another instance, insisted that “at the Securitate all the clerics that were arrested were accused of Legionarism.”<sup>121</sup>

From the perusal of some Securitate documents, it becomes apparent that Securitate often relied on verbal evidence, statements provided during its interrogations, as sole proof to link one to the Legionary organization. Furthermore, the secret police may have sought out to send one to court for the mere sake of making him/her denounce others, as was the case of Vaman Constantin. In one of the documents issued by a Securitate officer as a result of his interrogations of this student, the following proposal is written on the bottom of the respective page: “Sending him to court (in justitie) for a mission of denunciation (misiune de denunt).”<sup>122</sup> From these documents, one may also conclude that Securitate’s hidden agenda was to arrest the entire student body at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Bucharest. This one may infer from a similar document written on Vaman Constantin. In it, the Securitate officer proposes that Vaman be sent to court, along with “the entire lot of students of the Faculty of Theology.”<sup>123</sup> If this were true, then linking all these students to a notorious terrorist organization, even if by sheer denunciation by their peers, was a fitting approach to justify their arrests. It is possible, therefore, that in the eyes of Securitate, Plamadeala’s main crime may have been embodied by his association with the ultra-nationalist newspaper *The Echo of Bessarabia* and with the theology department at the University of Bucharest. Still, one must not exclude his involvement with the underground resistance,<sup>124</sup> as well as his possible association with the Legionaries, as suggested in these Securitate files, as additional reasons to make him a solid target of the secret police.

In respect to the Legionary Movement (also referred to as the Legion), it was not the only Romanian organization in the 1930s-1940s under the ultra-nationalist umbrella. Other political organizations, such as the Cult of the Fatherland (Cultul Patriei), the Block of the Nationalist Generation of 1922 (Blocul Generatiei Nationaliste de la 1922) or the King Carol II’s Front of

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<sup>121</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], Dragos Seuleanu, Carmen Dumitriu Seuleanu and Irineu Duvlea, eds. (Bucharest: Editura CUM, 1999), p. 143.

<sup>122</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 303.

<sup>123</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 303.

<sup>124</sup> Antonie Plamadeala speaks at greater length about the resistance movement in the mountains of Romania in the 1940s in *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], Dragos Seuleanu, Carmen Dumitriu Seuleanu and Irineu Duvlea, eds. (Bucharest: Editura CUM, 1999). See, for example, chapter “Nu voiam sa fim tradatori mantuirii neamului” (We did not want to be traitors to the nation’s salvation), pp. 139-145.

National Rebirth (Frontul Renasterii Nationale), shared similar ideals, such as ethnic chauvinism, anti-Communism and xenophobia. Moreover, membership of these parties was rather malleable, with members of one party at times changing allegiance and serving as members of another one, as was the case of the Romanian theologian Nichifor Crainic, for example. Crainic served as a member of several ultra-nationalist organizations in the 1930s, including at one point also the Legion, shifting party allegiance for the sake of “establish[ing] himself as an ideologue who could draw the various ultra-nationalist parties into a united front.”<sup>125</sup> Adherence to ultranationalist ideals, as demonstrated by Clark, was not necessarily synonymous to Legionarism. For the sake of simplifying things and more easily identifying their enemies, the Romanian Communist Party leadership and the Securitate, however, operated under the assumption that it was, and, as a result, labeled many as “Legionaries” based on this false premise. Plamadeala seems have been one of these cases. This will be further elaborated in chapter 5, in the discussion about Plamadeala’s trial.

*The manifesto “Christian Brothers” and the commencement of students’ arrests*

Placing the thirty students arrested by Securitate in the late 1940s and early 1950s, with Plamadeala being one of them, in the socio-political context discussed above, and interpreting their motives and actions primarily as responses to the changes occurring in their country at that time, are imperative. Their arrests, as Securitate documents reveal, were most likely triggered by its finding of several copies of the Legionary manifesto entitled “Christian brothers”<sup>126</sup> (*Frati crestini*) sometime in May 1948. Securitate might have known about some of these students prior to that, as Plamadeala infers in his recollections about his involvement in the publication of the clandestine newspaper *The Echo of Bessarabia*: “I only learned later that, if not all, at least a large number of copies of the newspaper were reaching the Securitate. When they arrested me, it was not hard for them to recognize, based on the style and ideas, that one of those who were writing it was I.”<sup>127</sup> These flyers may have served as a pretext for Securitate’s pending intent to incarcerate some of these students, including Plamadeala, who may have been already under its

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<sup>125</sup> Ronald Clark. “Nationalism and Orthodoxy: Nichifor Crainic and the Political Culture of the Extreme Right in 1930s Romania” in *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Vol. 40, No. 1, January 2012, p. 108.

<sup>126</sup> See appendix 3 for full content of this manifesto.

<sup>127</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], Dragos Seuleanu, Carmen Dumitriu Seuleanu and Irineu Duvlea, eds. (Bucharest: Editura CUM, 1999), pp. 82-83, 124-125, cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala, Detalii Biografice*, p. 52.

surveillance for some time. It is worth noting that, from Securitate documents accumulated about these flyers, Plamadeala was involved in neither their writing nor their distribution.

According to student declarations retrieved by Securitate, the flyers were delivered in late April 1948 to a small number of clerics, faithful Christians,<sup>128</sup> and even Church officials such as Patriarch Justinian Marina,<sup>129</sup> Metropolitan of Oltenia Nifon Criveanu, and Stanciu Stoian, the then Minister of Religious Denominations<sup>130</sup> (*Ministrul Cultelor*).<sup>131</sup> The manifesto urged people to not celebrate Labor Day but to maintain it as a day of fasting and prayer. This is because in that year May Day fell on the Saturday of the Passion Week, the week before Easter, which, by 1948, was no longer permitted to be celebrated publicly.<sup>132</sup>

### *The Legionary Movement as revealed by Securitate documents*

At the core, the Legion's primary agenda entailed what its leader Codreanu referred to as the creation of "new men" (oameni noi). In his book *Pentru Legionari* (For the Legionaries), Codreanu explains that the solution for Romania was not in the creation of new political "programs": "It is not programs that we must have but *men, new men*. For such as people are today, formed by politicians and infected by the Judaic influence, they will compromise the most brilliant political programs."<sup>133</sup> To do so, he set out a strong structural foundation designed to mold young minds, both men and women, from a very young age, according to Legionary principles.

The denunciations obtained by Securitate from the first students arrested in July 1948

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<sup>128</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, pp. 6, 27. The manifestos were delivered in envelopes, some of which were marked with a small sign, addressed to priests. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 37.

<sup>129</sup> Justinian Marina (1901-1977) pursued his theological education in Bucharest, at the Faculty of Theology from 1925 to 1929. He then worked at the Theological Seminary in Ramnicul-Valcea, and later served as vicar bishop and metropolitan of Moldavia (eastern part of Romania). From 1948 to his death he served as the patriarch of the Romania Orthodox Church. Lucian Leustean. *Orthodoxy and the Cold War*, p. 199. Marina, along with Iustin Moisescu (1977-1986) and Teocsit Arapasu (1986-2007), is considered a "red patriarch" for his allegiance and obedience to the Communist authorities. Marina's loyalty to the Communist leadership did not, however, protect the Orthodox Church from persecution. Arrests of clergy and closures of seminaries and monastic institutions did occur during his leadership. Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu. *Church, State and Democracy in Expanding Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 137.

<sup>130</sup> Romulus Boila and Alexandre Cretzianu. *Captive Rumania: A decade of Soviet Rule* (New York: Praeger, 1956), p. 174.

<sup>131</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 94.

<sup>132</sup> Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 11.

<sup>133</sup> Cited in Irina Livezeanu. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 288.

offer some insights into the nature of the activities of the Legionary movement at the University of Bucharest in the late 1940s and about its members. These declarations and the intelligence material collected by Securitate about these young men help one understand the rigor through which these “new men” were formed. Furthermore, the conclusions one may derive from these files are consistent with the findings provided by academic writings written on this subject, such as Irina Livezeanu’s *Cultural Politics in greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* and Roland Clark’s *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania’s Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*.

Similarly to the descriptions provided in these works, the Securitate files paint an image of a secretive organization with a highly organized structure and rigidity in its ritualistic operations. Organized by groups or nests (cuiburi) for men and fortresses (cetati) for women, comprised of three to thirteen members led by one individual,<sup>134</sup> the movement required a candidate who wanted to enter this organization to be first subjected to thorough examination of one’s mental and academic aptitude and character, as was the case of Toader Petre, for example. In late April 1948, Toader Petre, one of the thirty students arrested in the same group with Plamadeala, mailed a few “Christian brothers” manifestoes that he obtained from Sultana Petre.<sup>135</sup> According to Pavel Ionel’s declaration, the latter was a Legionary group leader of which Plamadeala was also a member.<sup>136</sup> In the case of Toader Petre, the task entailed the provision of a certain physical proof that he delivered such manifestoes to the central post office and the disclosing of a secret password, given to him upon the receipt of these flyers from Sultana Petre. The password was to be uttered to Bordasiu Nicolae, the president of the Association of Theology Students,<sup>137</sup> upon Toader Petre’s successful return from the respective mission, in a place made known to him earlier by the same person who delivered these flyers.<sup>138</sup>

Those who passed similar initiation assignments were then most likely “prepared”<sup>139</sup> by the organization’s members to become its sympathizers.<sup>140</sup> After a period of time, they were accepted as “real Legionaries or excluded when they did not meet the [movement’s]

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<sup>134</sup> Irina Livezeanu. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 288.

<sup>135</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 122.

<sup>136</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, pp. 6, 17,

<sup>137</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 24.

<sup>138</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, pp. 153-156.

<sup>139</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 28.

<sup>140</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 29.

demands.”<sup>141</sup> “If a student was excluded, he was not told this, but ties were broken with him and within a certain amount of time he could have understood that he was excluded.”<sup>142</sup> “As soon as those prepared were incorporated as sympathizers of the Legionary movement, old students were obtaining various [new] functions,” thus creating new groups wherein the meetings were held based on a “pyramid system.”<sup>143</sup> Ultimately, those who were part of the movement were made aware of the need to “preserve the secret of our establishment,”<sup>144</sup> Brasov Nita reported to Securitate on July 21, 1948. “We knew that we were a subversive organization that was functioning illegally.”<sup>145</sup>

The process of advancement from ‘sympathizer’ of the Legion to a fully-fledged Legionary and the tasks and requirements it entailed reminds one of the way in which one could have been promoted from being a member of the Legion’s *Cluster of Friends* (Manunchi de Prieteni) to its *Blood Brotherhood* (Fratie de Cruce/Trupa). These two student associations were for respectively fourteen and fifteen-year-old boys, who met regularly to read Legionary books, practice their oratorical skills by speaking publicly on pre-determined subjects, sing Legionary-themed songs and learn how to salute. Members also contributed monetarily to the Legion. The promotion from Friend to Blood Brother was rather laborious: one had to pass an entrance exam which tested one’s knowledge of the Brotherhood’s book, take an oath of allegiance, and bring some wormwood, a shrub with extremely bitter taste, desirably taken from a place with some historical significance, such as a battlefield or a grave of a national hero. Legionaries were handpicked from among members of the Blood Brotherhoods.<sup>146</sup>

Besides its being rather rigorous in its initiation practices, the Legionary Movement may have been perceived as rather secretive and enigmatic by an outsider, especially after the establishment of the Communist regime, when the Legion was seen as both illegal and subversive. Securitate documents confirm that in the period of “preparation students could not attend any Legionary meetings and were taught about the Legionary movement with a great deal

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<sup>141</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 29.

<sup>142</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 28.

<sup>143</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 30.

<sup>144</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 89.

<sup>145</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 89.

<sup>146</sup> Roland Roland Clark. *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania’s Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*, unpublished doctoral thesis defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, pp. 358-359.

of prudence. Only when they accepted to enter as sympathizers, were they taught more advanced notions about the Legionary movement.”<sup>147</sup>

In relation to this matter, Vaman Constantin claimed in one of his declarations that “those belonging to the Legionary movement are organized by triads and I could only know two people [from the organization], and only when he [the leader] would be convinced that I need to know them. [This was the case in order to avoid] an easy denunciation about the other members by someone who is not well prepared and is caught [by the enemy].”<sup>148</sup> Vaman later added that after Easter 1948 “the Legionary movement being under persecution employed the ‘chain’ system, through which communications were carried out from person to person and by the leader or someone appointed by the leader... Meetings could no longer take place because we were exposed and we received even the order to not ever hold them, only [to carry out] communications on the street, so that they would not attract any attention or for [these meetings] to be held in hidden places.”<sup>149</sup> On a similar note, Braga Roman, another arrested student, declared that “the movement ...[did] not feed curiosities,”<sup>150</sup> insinuating once again that members were not permitted to ask questions but were asked to follow diligently orders from higher authority.

Here, it is important to stress upon the rigidity in which the Legionary organization associated with the Faculty of Theology at the University of Bucharest organized its meetings, at the library of the student dorms Radu Voda,<sup>151</sup> in their garden,<sup>152</sup> or at the library of the Association of Theology Students from the Radu Voda street,<sup>153</sup> every two to three weeks.<sup>154</sup> Vaman Constantin, in a statement he gave to Securitate on 23 July 1948, described these meetings as following: “first, there was prayer and oath, discussion of Biblical text<sup>155</sup> chosen by the leader, the minute dedicated to the Legion, and friendship during which observations were made to those from the group.”<sup>156</sup> Similarly, Brasov Nita, in his own note provided to Securitate,

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<sup>147</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6. p. 32.

<sup>148</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 25.

<sup>149</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, pp. 25, 40.

<sup>150</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 59.

<sup>151</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 61.

<sup>152</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 89.

<sup>153</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 22.

<sup>154</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 86.

<sup>155</sup> Sometimes, the reading of the Biblical passage was accompanied by the reading of a fragment from Legionary books, such as the Book for the Legionaries (Cartea pentru Legionari). ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 26.

<sup>156</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 17.

claimed that “meetings began with the oath, then the call of the dead (apelul mortilor),<sup>157</sup> then [someone] was reading a verse or a paragraph from the New Testament and a text from a Legionary book.”<sup>158</sup>

Clark confirms that the Blood Brothers structured their meetings in the same format as the Legionaries did. Every meeting began with the following statement pronounced out loud after the nest’s chief:

Let us pray. Let us raise our thoughts to the souls of the martyrs Mota and Marin,<sup>159</sup> Stere Ciumeti, and all our other comrades who have fallen for the Legion or who died in the Legionary faith. We believe in the resurrection of a Legionary Romania and in breaking down the wall of hate and cowardice that surrounds it. I swear that I will never betray the Legion, the Captain, or my Blood Brothers.<sup>160</sup>

After the “call of the dead” mentioned by Brasov Nita in his Securitate declaration, and during which the nest’s members were stating out loud the names of dead Legionaries who played a significant role in the establishment and growth of the Legion, they would all answer out loud “Present,” on behalf of the respective dead people. Besides the reading of Biblical and Legionary literature, they were also instructed about various military positions and held discussions deemed preparatory and filled with teachings and guidelines derived from Legionary literature.<sup>161</sup>

In respect to the chairing of Legionary meetings, Vaman Constantin claimed that they were “led by each member of the group, by rotation. ... Fees were paid by the members of the organization.”<sup>162</sup> “In the group from the Faculty of Theology [fees] were not taken based on the ratio 1/40, but everyone was giving as much as they had, between 10 to 20 lei.<sup>163</sup> ... After Easter, not even that amount was being collected because students were looking to save so that they

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<sup>157</sup> In a police report written in December 1948 in respect to the conclusions concerning Securitate investigation of the arrested students’ crimes, it is insinuated that the “call of the dead (apelul mortilor) was referring to the remembering of Legionary figures who were dead, such as “Mota and Marin.” See ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 8. This refers to Ion Mota and Vasile Marin, both veterans of the Legionary movement in Romania. Ion Mota was Codreanu’s ‘right hand’. He died with other Legionaries while helping Franco in his military revolt during the Spanish Civil War. Philip Morgan. *Fascism in Europe, 1919-1945* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 46.

<sup>158</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, pp. 86-89.

<sup>159</sup> This refers to Ion Mota and Vasile Marin, both veterans of the Legionary movement in Romania. Philip Morgan. *Fascism in Europe, 1919-1945* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 46.

<sup>159</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, pp. 86-89.

<sup>160</sup> Roland Clark. *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania’s Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*, unpublished doctoral thesis defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, p. 360.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 358-362.

<sup>162</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 22.

<sup>163</sup> Romanian currency.



could pay tuition fees and [other fees] for the upcoming exams.”<sup>164</sup> These fees or *cotizatii*<sup>165</sup> were used to offer aid to Legionaries in prison in the form of “money, food and clothing.”<sup>166</sup>

Last, but not least, one must briefly discuss the entrepreneurial nature of the Legion, more exactly, the fact that its members ran businesses with the scope of using the profits for providing monetary help to the poor and the imprisoned Legionaries and their family members. Braga Roman confirms that the nest at the Matei Voevod dorms had a business of its own.<sup>167</sup> Throughout Romania Legionaries ran cooperatives, shops and restaurants, cooperatives being among the most common type of enterprise undertaken by the members of this movement. These cooperatives were known for their low prices, deliberately decreased so as to provide a contrast to the prices offered in Jewish-owned shops. This strategy was intentional, to spark further division and enmity among Romanians towards the Jewish population, a tactic which Codreanu deceptively described as business “based on love for our fellow human beings, not on stealing from them.”<sup>168</sup>

In 1947, as reported in the informative note written by agent “Popa Ion” in December 1960, Plamadeala was a member of the “University Student Committee with another [student by the name of] Bordasiu<sup>169</sup> and Braga Roman and others.”<sup>170</sup> As stated in the same note, Plamadeala “was distributing scholarships to students and food from the Americans.”<sup>171</sup> From the information provided by “Popa Ion” it is possible to conclude that Plamadeala’s work as a member of the University Student Committee overlapped in some way with the activity carried out by the Legionary organization. It is equally plausible to speculate that the former organization may have been nothing other than the Legionary movement in disguise. This may be true because Bordasiu intended to create in the spring of 1948 a so-called Association of Christian Youth that would represent “nothing other than the masking of the Legionary

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<sup>164</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 31.

<sup>165</sup> Roland Clark. *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania’s Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*, unpublished doctoral thesis defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, p. 367.

<sup>166</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 57.

<sup>167</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 60.

<sup>168</sup> Roland Clark. *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania’s Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*, unpublished doctoral thesis defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, p. 343.

<sup>169</sup> Referring to Bordasiu Nicolae, the president of the Association of Theology Students. See ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 24.

<sup>170</sup> ACNSAS, IF, dossier 1015, vol. 1, p. 199. See also Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 50.

<sup>171</sup> ACNSAS, IF, dossier 1015, vol. 1, p. 199. See also Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 50.

activity.”<sup>172</sup> This information was provided by Plamadeala on 20 March 1957, as a witness at Bordasiu’s trial. Furthermore, it is also possible that these organizations were two different entities that happened to share members and some ideals. Whether as a Legionary, as some of the students’ declarations obtained by Securitate claim, or as a member of an organization aiming to alleviate poverty by distributing aid to the needy, the Securitate documents concerning Plamadeala’s life in 1945-1948 reveal this theologian’s leadership qualities even as a young man. In his memoirs Plamadeala recognizes himself that these traits were present in him from an early age: “since I was a child I always had this sentiment that I have to be leader of people.”<sup>173</sup>

Beginning in summer of 1948, Plamadeala spent the following six years on the run from Securitate, years which he described as the time “when each and every one of us was hunted.”<sup>174</sup> By “us” the theologian was most likely referring to him and his fellow theology students. The following chapter provides a concise description of his life during those years, when, as the theologian declared, “everyone of us felt chased [to the point that] we did not know where we would be sleeping the following day.”<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vo. 5, pp. 43-45.

<sup>173</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], Dragos Seuleanu, Carmen Dumitriu Seuleanu and Irineu Duvlea, eds. (Bucharest: Editura CUM, 1999), p. 253.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, p. 145.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*.

### Chapter 3

#### Years on the run from the Securitate, 1948-1954

*About the impossibility to understand fully the years as a runaway in Plamadeala's life*  
In his memoirs, Plamadeala recalls his early adulthood years concluding that:

All the experiences [during that period] were difficult, all of them! I tried, at one point, to tell which was harder and which was easier. None was easier! Each one had its degree of difficulty. For example, the years on the run. Six years on the run. I did not sleep one night without fear... The first night during which I slept in peace was the day I was arrested, because I knew that nothing else could happen to me. Then, there were the years in jail and [the years on] trial... Those were hard! I will not even have the courage to tell you how they were... not because the [telling] would be incredible, but because I would be ashamed. To how many humiliations I was subjected...<sup>176</sup>

The statement above brings to the attention of the researcher and, also, of the reader, the gross limitations one faces in understanding and writing with accuracy about this man's life during these difficult years. Left only with his memoirs, the brother's recollections of these events and police files written on him as the sole pieces of an arcane and cumbersome puzzle sought out to be solved, one rapidly surrenders to the impossibility of telling with complete certitude *the* story of this man's life, and especially of the life in the years when he was running from the police. Yet, faced with the obliging acceptance of one's incapacity to tell this story, *a* story must be nonetheless told, a story that, to stress once again, will never fully describe the inner state of the person whose life history is into question.

Furthermore, a few lines must be added here about the limitations one faces in understanding the consulted police files written about this theologian, documents that speak about two realities, the tangible and the non-tangible, the latter being reflective of the inner psychological state of the people these documents are concerned with. To explain this further, I will provide an example: whereas to me, a detached researcher, a given document may look like a mere multitude of legal sentences conveying a decision of the Military Tribunal to incarcerate for seven years a young theology student for alleged "subversive activity," as it was the case for Plamadeala, that very document, in reality, stands also as a symbol of the suffering, angst and despair of the person to whom it refers. It also possibly serves as an example of the tacit angst and regret of those who partook in orchestrating the circumstances leading up to his arrest.

Moreover, given that mental states mentioned earlier are platonic forms of human

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<sup>176</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 84. Cited also in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 57.

feelings whose degrees of intensity varies from one individual to another, and, which are therefore a mystery to everyone except to the one who experienced them, there is a side of the story pertaining to each of these documents that researchers will never be able to bring to light. Most likely, this is what Plamadeala intended to convey in his novel *Three Hours in Hell* (*Trei Ceasuri in Iad*), written about his experiences during those years, possibly indirectly to warn future generations about one's attempt to make sense of the times in which he lived: "You can say the word 'paradoxical,' you can say 'extraordinary' and [you can say many] more words, but all of them will mean nothing other than the incapacity to translate into words sentiments and conditions of the mind and of the heart."<sup>177</sup>

### *Plamadeala's life on the run within a historical context*

The years on the run will remain, arguably, some of the most enigmatic years in Plamadeala's life. That is because very few Securitate documents refer to his whereabouts during this time and most of the information on this theologian's activity and hiding places during this period comes from the memoirs of Plamadeala and of his brother Mihai, with a few scant Securitate reports and declarations from several other individuals to attest to the information provided in his or his brother's recollections pertaining to these years. Therefore, the discourse concerning this part of this theologian's life is primarily based on the subjective—human memory.

Furthermore, Plamadeala's years on the run fit within a historical timeframe (1945-1964) when terror and repression of the regime's "enemies" and opponents with perceived potentiality of becoming as such were carried out *en masse* by the Communist government. As Deletant explains, during these years "many citizens had the sense that they were being hunted."<sup>178</sup> Plamadeala's story on the run serves as a mere example of thousands of other untold stories of people who were, like him, "hunted" during that time by the police. After 1964, the situation of political prisoners ameliorated significantly, with many being granted pardon by the regime. Despite the totalitarian nature of Ceausescu's regime, Romanians' fear of the Securitate decreased somewhat beginning with 1964, primarily because Securitate's brutality and terror

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<sup>177</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Trei Ceasuri in Iad* (Three Hours in Hell) (Bucuresti: Editura Sophia, 2013), p. 54.

<sup>178</sup> Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 1.

towards people lessened.<sup>179</sup> Hence the theologian's years as a runaway took place during an especially difficult period in Romania's history. Although filled with at times somewhat humorous adventures, the reader must be reminded that his story unfolded in a socio-political milieu that was far from amicable to the average Romanian citizen.

*First year on the run: from Bucharest to Brasov and Bucharest again, then to Baia Mare*

Plamadeala learned of his colleagues' arrests in the summer of 1948. "In the summer of 1948 the hunt began"<sup>180</sup> he recalled in his memoirs:

At first a few arrests took place at several student dorm rooms. We found out rapidly about this and those who could run away fast from Bucharest. We did not know where to go. However, I took advantage of the fact that at that time a few student brigades for volunteer work were being created and I thought that in this manner I will wipe out my trace and I signed up in one of these student brigades for volunteer work. I was sent to the triage complex Brasov to dig holes (sapa gropi), and to pour concrete. And I came with this group to Brasov. I was finishing my third year [of university studies]. I think it was July-August [at that time]. I managed to work on that site for a month until Securitate arrived there and arrested two of us.... Then I thought "in this case they will take me, too; if they did not take me at that time, that means that they do not have the lists yet. The following day I disappeared from there."<sup>181</sup>

Plamadeala's decision to leave the respective working site was judicious. By August 1948, his name was already brought to the attention of Securitate. And, after countless interrogations of the arrested students, Securitate issued on December 8 of that year a comprehensive police report which brought into light its own conclusions, recommending that these young men were tried at a Military Tribunal, which later suggested periods of incarceration from one to ten years,<sup>182</sup> depending of the severity of their crimes. These students, including Plamadeala, were accused of engaging "in a conspiring manner to challenge the existent order and to destroy the accomplishments of the established democracy."<sup>183</sup> They were described as "those who in the past encouraged and committed the most odious of crimes against the Romanian people, having had brought about the Fascist-Hitlerist occupation in the country and that has pushed us to an unjust war against the USSR. ... Inside the country [the Legionary Movement] practiced the most fanatic and chauvinist type of nationalism—promoting enmity

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 126. Cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 54.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Bordasiu Nicolae received, for example, 20 years of forced labor and 10 years of "civic degradation." ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 87.

<sup>183</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 2.

against the established democratic regime and being unhappy about our country obtaining its national independence.”<sup>184</sup>

Furthermore, the report accused the organization of educating “its members in a Fascist-legionary manner.”<sup>185</sup> It described the spreading of the “Christian Brothers” flyers as “a way to instigate enmity against the working class and the intellectual social class (*patura sociala intelectuala*) which was preparing itself with enthusiasm to celebrate Labour Day.”<sup>186</sup> The respective document also concluded that “to attain their [the students’] final goal—the violent overthrow of the regime, the members of the organization were organizing marches. ... They were collecting and storing arms in the mountains which had to be shared in a timely manner among them, some of them storing ammunition [and] arms in their homes.”<sup>187</sup> In this police file, Plamadeala is listed as the fourteenth student on the list of accused students, with the following concluding sentence pertaining to his accusation: “student [in] the third year at the Faculty of Medicine<sup>188</sup> in 1947-1948, took part in the organization, initiated in the group [which met at] the Matei Voevod dorms, led by Vila Petre, together with Ghitescu Ioan and Carstoiu Iulian. Both Vaman Constantin and Pavel Ion in declarations dating from August 20, 1948 confirm his participation in the organization.”<sup>189</sup> For this accusation, he received seven years in prison and five years “civic degradation.”<sup>190</sup>

From Brasov, Plamadeala headed to Bucharest. He explained this strategic move as follows: “I returned ... [to] Bucharest, but I did not go home, of course. I returned to Bucharest because only there could I organize a reliable hiding place.”<sup>191</sup> In Bucharest, Plamadeala met his friend Sandu Bucescu, who, like Plamadeala, was sought out by the police. Serendipitously, they were both seeking a hiding a place. The young men agreed to head to Baia Mare, where a former student of Sandu Bucescu’s father was then a principal of a technical school. In Baia Mare, the

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 3.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 4.

<sup>188</sup> Although not directly connected to the topic discussed herein, the reader is asked to note the error committed in this report in reference to Plamadeala. The theologian never pursued a medical education, and, in 1947-1948, he was a theology undergraduate student at the University of Bucharest. Minor as it is, this error questions the credibility of other information provided in this and other Securitate documents, making it cumbersome for one to reach a convincing assessment of the information provided by the Secret Police in these files.

<sup>189</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 12.

<sup>190</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 87.

<sup>191</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 126. Cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 55.

respective school principal was nowhere to be found, as he had been moved to a different post in the city of Petrosani. Both Plamadeala and Bucescu went to the Technical School (Scoala Tehnica) and the Mining School (Scoala Minera) from Baia Mare, seeking employment. Plamadeala obtained a teaching job at the Professional Mining School (Scoala Profesionala Minera) and his friend—at the Technical Mining School (Scoala Tehnica Minera). Asked why they were seeking employment in Baia Mare, the ingenious students provided the following simple yet convincing answer: “Well, the Faculty of Theology [at the University of Bucharest] was abolished.”<sup>192</sup> In Baia Mare, Plamadeala and Bucescu worked as instructors for one academic year, until June 1949.<sup>193</sup>

Plamadeala’s survival skills and ability to successfully adapt to the unknown were tested once again in this city. This time, it was his capacity to successfully teach an academic curriculum to which he lacked even the most rudimentary of preparation:

I was given hours [to teach] Russian, but no one ever knew that I did not know Russian. I was learning the lessons a day prior to teaching the children the lessons. Based on what criterion did I obtain the identification from the School District (inspectorat) as a Russian teacher? In my transcript as a theology student, which I had with me, the last course listed was the history of the Russian theological literature. ... I made a [written] copy of this transcript but instead of writing the history of literature I wrote Russian language. On the basis of this document, I was named professor of the Russian language. I repeat, I did not know Russian at all. Even now I know only a few words.<sup>194</sup>

By June 1949, Plamadeala knew he was sought after by Securitate and had to find a new hiding place. This he found in the city of Cluj, where he would spend the following year finishing his undergraduate degree in theology.

Here, it is important to stress once again that Leonida knew very well that he was under police’s surveillance. He could have simply chosen, for example, to hide in a remote area in the Carpathian Mountains in order to avoid the pending peril of being arrested. Instead, he chose to finalize his undergraduate studies, in an environment where the police could easily find him. This decision may have been caused by two things, either by his inability to predict fully the risk of being caught by the police or by his strong dedication to the pursuit of higher learning, even when faced with the danger of being incarcerated. Examining his later impressive academic

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 126-128. Cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 56.

achievements,<sup>195</sup> one may easily prefer to identify the latter as the most likely reason for his choice to continue his studies even in the midst of great uncertainty and exposure to the police. In his book *Bessarabia* Plamadeala confirms that the need not to remain with his studies “unfinished” was “vital” for him.<sup>196</sup> That very internal calling to complete his studies despite the possibility of being arrested brought him to Cluj, where he spent his second year of the six years of his tragic saga on the run from the Securitate.

### *Studies in Cluj*

In Cluj, Plamadeala was the student of Dr. Nicolae Balca,<sup>197</sup> who was at that time professor of pedagogy, homelitics and catechetics at the Theological Institute in Cluj (Institutul teologic universitar din Cluj).<sup>198</sup> Balca helped him enroll in this university and served as his undergraduate thesis advisor. In his conversation with Plamadeala about a potential thesis topic, Plamadeala recalls the following dialogue between them: “Listen, Plamadeala, we have to show those from Cluj what it means to study in the Capital!”<sup>199</sup> Balca, himself a seasoned scholar with a doctorate education from the University of Jena, Germany (1930-1935), where he wrote a PhD thesis entitled *Die Bedeutung Gogartens und seines Kreises für die Pädagogik der Gegenwart*,<sup>200</sup> may have been nostalgic of his student years in the cosmopolitan city of Jena when he challenged Plamadeala on his choice of his thesis topic while stressing the need for it to be exemplary. “Let’s do a great thesis,”<sup>201</sup> Balca asked his student. “Let’s show them how it’s done.” “Alright, professor, but what could we write on?” “What are you reading these days, more into [the realm of] philosophy, more scientific?” “Well, professor. Last book I read was that which has recently appeared: *Man, an Unknown Creature* by Alexis Carrel.”<sup>202</sup> “This is it.

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<sup>195</sup> Plamadeala obtained a doctoral degree in Theological Studies from Oxford University.

<sup>196</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 31.

<sup>197</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolutului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 130-131. Cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 56.

<sup>198</sup> Ion Itu. “Nicolae Balca-Exercitii de Istorie a Filosofiei” (Nicolae-Balca-Exercises in the History of Philosophy) in *Studii de Istorie a Filosofiei Romanesti* [Studies in the history of Romanian philosophy], Mona Mamulea, ed. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Romane, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>199</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolutului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 130-131. Cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 56.

<sup>200</sup> Ion Itu. “Nicolae Balca-Exercitii de Istorie a Filosofiei”, p. 1.

<sup>201</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolutului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 130-131. Cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 56.

<sup>202</sup> Alexis Carrel (1873-1944) was born in France and moved to the USA in 1905, where he served as a medical researcher at the Rockefeller Institute in New York. He is known for his work in suturing blood vessels and the transplant of organs and blood vessels, work which earned him a Noble Prize in in Physiology of Medicine in 1912. He is also known for his writings *Man the Unknown* (1935), the *Culture of Organs* (1938) and *Treatment of Infected*



You are writing me a thesis with the title ‘The Importance of Carrelian anthropology for a Christian pedagogy’ and you come to me as I am professor of pedagogy.”<sup>203</sup>

In the summer 1949, the 23-year old Leonida completed his undergraduate thesis with the highest honors, an accomplishment which permitted him to be selected as the student body representative at the event celebrating the ending of the institution’s academic year. The respective event occurred with the bishop of Cluj Nicolae Colan<sup>204</sup> and bishop of Oradea Nicolae Popovici both present in the audience. In the ecclesiastic journal of the city of Cluj *Renasterea* (Rebirth) dating from 1 July 1949, a small paragraph was written about Plamadeala’s message to the students, professors and clerics who attended that event. In his speech Leonida promised that he would not forget them and “their teachings.” “According to a wise saying, the teacher must live and perpetuate himself through his students and we will seek to make ourselves worthy of the trust that was put in us to be fighters for the consolidation of the brotherly unity of all the sons of the nation.”<sup>205</sup>

The theologian admitted once that during his years on the run he spoke very rarely with his family, out of “fear.”<sup>206</sup> “I did not want to engage my family in a [police] inquiry during which they could not resist to divulge my whereabouts. So, for the most part, during those six years on the run, the family did not know where I was. This is how I was protecting them.”<sup>207</sup> Similarly, as discussed in the first chapter of this work, the family protected their oldest son by never divulging to him the presumed reason of his younger brother’s death. In 1951, Plamadeala’s brother, Gheorghe, succumbed to pneumonia and tuberculosis following his attempt to warn Plamadeala of his arrest order Nr. 100.015/1950<sup>208</sup> which the family received in January 1950 at their home in Bucharest.<sup>209</sup> Because of their attempt to mutually protect each

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*Wounds* (1917). See Louise S. Sherby. *The Who's Who of Nobel Prize Winners, 1901-2000*. ed. 4<sup>th</sup> (Westport, CT: Oryx Press, 2002), p. 111.

<sup>203</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 130-131. Cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 56.

<sup>204</sup> Nicolae Colan later became metropolitan of Ardeal (1957-1967). *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, Ken Parry, ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 204.

<sup>205</sup> “Cuvantul studentimii rostit de domnul Leonida Plamadeala” (The message on behalf of the students uttered by Mr. Leonida Plamadeala) in “Renasterea”, Cluj, Nr. 25-26, July 1, 1949, p. 2. Cited also in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 57.

<sup>206</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 145.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 219. See also Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 60.

<sup>209</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 17.

other, there was more than one protagonist who partook in the writing of Plamadeala's story while he was on the run. Besides him, there were also his parents and brothers.

### *Entrance in the monastic life*

Plamadeala left Cluj that same night, after the graduation event, in search for a new hiding place.<sup>210</sup> Securitate records, as well as Plamadeala's memoirs, confirm that the theologian's next move in his attempt to seek a temporary hiding spot was to head for the Monastery Prislop, now in Hunedoara county. The most likely cause of his choice to find refuge at Prislop lied in his close-knit connections with a monk residing at that time at Prislop by the name of Arsenie Boca. Interrogated by Securitate in September 1955, Arsenie Boca confirmed that Plamadeala arrived at Prislop "sometimes in June 1949."<sup>211</sup>

Securitate documents attest that Plamadeala met Arsenie Boca (1910-1989) sometimes in 1947, while the latter was a hierodeacon (deacon monk), at the Monastery Sambata de Sus, from Fagaras.<sup>212</sup> This information is also corroborated in Plamadeala's memoirs about Arsenie Boca.<sup>213</sup> Boca was tonsured at this monastery in 1942. Prior to his arrival at Sambata de Sus, in 1939, Boca, whose given name prior to becoming a monk was Zian-Valean, took a course in the fall 1939 in Chisinau, the capital of Bessarabia, on how to brighten icons with gold.<sup>214</sup> It is possible that Boca's experience in Bessarabia may have instigated the initial interest in Plamadeala when they met in 1947, at Sambata de Sus. But it was Plamadeala's depth and keen interest in aesthetical matters that may have made him one of Boca's most favorite students. In Plamadeala's recollections of Boca, one easily notices a great deal of admiration for this monk, who was later under Securitate's surveillance for his stand against the Communist regime.<sup>215</sup>

"I had the revelation of the man he was," Plamadeala recalls about Arsenie Boca when he first met him at Sambata de Sus, "revelation of the psychologist, of the prophet, even though he was not a prophet within a Biblical sense, but a human being who, by using the means of psychology was able, out of an answer to a

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<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>211</sup> ACNSAS, IF, dossier 1015, vol. 2, pp. 61-62. Cited also in *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice* and Adrian Petcu, p. 58.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 140. See also Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 31.

<sup>214</sup> Florin Dutu. *Parintele Arsenie Boca-o Biografie* [Father Arsenie Boca-a Biography] (Bucharest: Editura Floare Alba de Colt, 2013), pp. 18-25.

<sup>215</sup> People's veneration of Boca continued even after his death. The monk is now well revered among many Romanian Orthodox believers, to the degree to which some even seek to canonize him while others organize pilgrimages to his grave, in Hunedoara, where they believe the grave emanates a certain healing and mystical energy. Information derived from a personal discussion with a Christian Orthodox believer in Romania, in May of 2014, in Bucharest.

question to deduce more than the person who asked the question wanted him to deduce, to the point that the question he was asking you following that seemed prophetic, but, in reality, was deduced by him from the answer given by the person with whom he was conversing.” ... Even though there were many other students from Cluj and other parts [of the country] who were coming here, I became his favorite [student]. I was a bit of the scholastic type, ... was wearing a white coat and a walking stick, which he liked. He was also into aesthetics.<sup>216</sup> He was the author of many beautiful book covers. ... that exhibited a good aesthetic taste.<sup>217</sup>

Plamadeala also claimed that later Boca would gain a “profound trust” in him to the point that he would be the only student with whom the monk would agree to walk alone, by “the lake.”<sup>218</sup>

That trust went as far as Plamadeala being allowed at one point to meet the people who were hiding in the mountains and whom Boca was feeding.<sup>219</sup>

Several months later, on 6 September 1949, Plamadeala was tonsured at Prislop with his friend Stelian Manolache. Plamadeala received the name of Antonie while Manolache, that of Dometie. The witness at the ceremony initiating the two young men into monasticism was Sandu Tudor, a theologian, journalist and Christian Orthodox monk, known for his role in founding the mystical movement the “Burning Bush” (Rugul Aprins), described by some as the “movement of spiritual resistance,”<sup>220</sup> of which Plamadeala was also part. The movement, which held regular gatherings at the Antim Monastery in Bucharest, brought together some of Romania’s finest thinkers of the time, such as Tudor Vianu,<sup>221</sup> Paul Sterian and Vasile Voiculescu.<sup>222</sup> Through his association with the *Rugul Aprins* movement, and his association with Arsenie Boca, the mind and character of the young Plamadeala was undeniably being molded into exhibiting high refinement in both thought and mannerism. Within a small time frame, more specifically, five years, from his arrival to Romania as a humble refugee from the war-torn Bessarabia, the young man by the name of Leonida or Antonie, entered social settings of the finest cultural finesse: this, without any family to have supported in some material manner his socio-academic advancement. This success could have only come from within, from this young man’s innate strength and

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<sup>216</sup> Arsenie Boca was also an artist, who painted icons and church murals.

<sup>217</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 141.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> Ciprian Iulian Toroczcai. “Cristian Badilita and Contac Emanuel, eds. Si Cerul s-a umplut de sfinti... martiriul in antichitatea creștina si in secolul xx” in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 64, issue 4, December 2012, p. 604.

<sup>221</sup> Tudor Vianu (1897-1964) was a literary critic, historian and philosopher. Silviu Brucan. *The Wasted Generation: Memoirs of the Romanian Journey from Capitalism to Socialism and Back* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), p. 226.

<sup>222</sup> Vasile Voiculescu (1894-1963) was a Romanian, natural mystic poet. Roland Greene, Stephen Cusman et al. eds. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4<sup>th</sup>. Ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 1206. Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 59.

ambition to advance in life against all odds.

From Roman Braga's declaration given to Securitate in 1955, it is plausible to conclude that Plamadeala entered into the monastic life per Arsenie Boca's advice. In this note, Braga divulged to the police a part of the conversation Plamadeala had with him sometimes in 1953, at the Varatec Monastery<sup>223</sup>:

At first, he [Plamadeala] was afraid, but having had spoken with Arsenie Boca, a monk from the Monastery Sambata de Sus whom he admired, he [Boca] told him: 'If you want no one to find you, swear allegiance to God and become a monk.' This is what he [Plamadeala] told me he did. He became a monk and since then he even decided not to avoid anyone, not to hide and no one asked him anything [ever since].<sup>224</sup>

It is very possible that a conversation of this type did occur between Plamadeala and Boca. Nicolae Bordasiu, in another instance, confirmed to Securitate that Boca offered to help hide him at Prislop, while Bordasiu was on the run from the Securitate. Based on Bordasiu's declaration, Boca was hiding Plamadeala and Plamadeala's friend Stelian Manolache at Prislop at that time.<sup>225</sup> If Bordasiu's statement was true, then the discussion between Bordasiu and Boca may have taken place sometime in the summer or fall of 1949, when Plamadeala lived at this monastery.

Nonetheless, it is very unlikely that Plamadeala became a monk solely to remain in greater anonymity. If this were to be true, Plamadeala would have ceased to live in this capacity when he was defrocked, after his release from prison. In Plamadeala, there was always a longing for and inclination towards spirituality and mysticism. Plamadeala's very essence embodied these ideals; his vast theological works serve as evidence that his intellectual makeup was destined for the pursuit of theological truth. Life as a monk was the most fitted life for someone with Plamadeala's spiritual and intellectual acumen. This he insinuates in his conversations with his friends years later, during the time when he was defrocked and employed in a plant in the suburbs of Bucharest, as an "unqualified worker."<sup>226</sup> These "friends" also had other hats, those of agents of Securitate. From their reports written about their conversations with Plamadeala, one may read between the lines about Plamadeala's ardent desire to return to the monastic life, at a time when this return seemed almost impossible.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Monastery located in the north-eastern part of Romania.

<sup>224</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 71. Cited also in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, p. 62.

<sup>225</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 62.

<sup>226</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 32.

<sup>227</sup> This information is provided in several instances by informers who wrote reports on Plamadeala, after his release from prison. These documents may be found in ACNSAS, IF, dossier 1015, vol. 1-3.

Hence, the possibility of changing his name from Leonida to Antonie, and, therefore, of becoming less likely to be found by Securitate, may have accelerated Plamadeala's decision to become a monk. However, the respective choice was most likely deeply rooted in his being, from his early years spent in Stolniceni, Basarabia, while he was reading books in the church's library, engrossed in the world of Creanga and Ispirescu.<sup>228</sup> In his declaration at his own trial dated from 29 June 1955, he explains that his decision to become a monk was as a result of "a wish from his childhood."<sup>229</sup>

In January 1950 Plamadeala left Prislop for Bucharest. His brother Gheorghe came to Prislop to announce to him of his arrest order. "I did not know anymore where and at whose home to go,"<sup>230</sup> Plamadeala wrote in *Basarabia*. "Because at that time the most anonymous place was Bucharest, I headed there."<sup>231</sup> Plamadeala headed to the capital with Gheorghe. From there, "Gheorghe went home" and Plamadeala "headed to some trustworthy friends, the family of Professor Dardalat."<sup>232</sup> "In Bucharest," Plamadeala recalled, "I went to the Monastery Antim, where the monks knew me, but where, once again, I could not stay because it was visited by a lot of people and it was under the surveillance of authority."<sup>233</sup> Ion Dardalat, a mathematics professor, let him stay in his home until spring 1950:

Dardalat covered the windows with blue paper so that nothing could have been seen, either from the inside out or from the outside in [the house]. I was staying alone in the house; I had to not respond to any knock on the door, and when he was at home, even though he was avoiding as much as he could the visits from the outside I had to run to the cellar. [The house] had an entrance from the inside [of the home] towards the cellar, where I had to stay. It was not comfortable. It was cold and I had to remain there until the respective guest left. This professor took care of me during the entire winter. ... In the spring, his wife and two children were coming from Saliste. So there was no place for me there any longer ... as long as there were two children who could have spoken with the children outside.<sup>234</sup>

### *Crasna Gorjeana and Slatina*

Having spent the winter in Dardalat's home, Plamadeala left for Craiova, then for the hermitage Crasna in Gorj county. There he hid for several months.<sup>235</sup> Daniil Sandu Tudor (1889-

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<sup>228</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>229</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 74.

<sup>230</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 31.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 17.

<sup>233</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 31.

<sup>234</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 64.

<sup>235</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 31.

1966),<sup>236</sup> Antonie's spiritual leader from the Monastery Antim, was a monk there, along with Arsenie Papacioc and Adrian Fageteanu.<sup>237</sup> Sandu Tudor was at that time editor of the newspaper "Credinta" (Faith) and of the literary journal *Floare de Foc* (Flower of Fire).<sup>238</sup> It was he who brought Plamadeala to Crasna. Sandu Tudor, a philosopher and a writer, intended to establish here a monastery for highly intellectual monks. This enterprise, however, ambitious as it may have seemed, proved to be a failure. The people running the Crasna monastery, namely Sandu Tudor, Adrian Fageteanu and Plamadeala, were not well equipped with the necessary skills to deal with farm-related responsibilities: We were all from the city," Plamadeala recalled in his memoirs:

We did not know how to take care of animals or chickens. Metropolitan Firmilian<sup>239</sup> gave us this monastery with the thought that we would make it a monastery for intellectuals, but father Daniil (Sandu Tudor) took it by the book and began taking us to church seven times per day and per night. One day I told him "You know, I forgot to lock the chickens [in the farm]. ... That night, unfortunately, our chickens were stolen. Another time, I forgot to open the gates through which the horses that were eating grass freely in the mountains entered [the farm]. The horses did not enter [the farm] that night, but they never entered! Most probably, the wolves ate them, or they got lost through the woods, or someone stole them. The same thing happened with the pigs. In a short time frame, we emptied the entire farm, to the satisfaction of Father Daniil, who did not like the farm."<sup>240</sup>

Within a few months of stay at Crasna, Antonie had to leave it for two main reasons: first, the Securitate found out his whereabouts in Crasna and could have arrested him at any moment and secondly, and more interestingly, there was some discordance between Plamadeala and Sandu Tudor, who claimed that Plamadeala demonstrated a "spirit of independence and even of lack of obedience that does not fit within a community set out according to a program [promoting] unity and equality."<sup>241</sup> As punishment, Plamadeala was given five hundred prostrations (metanii), a canon he refused to comply with, informing Sandu Tudor that he would also leave the monastery shortly after the respective incident.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Jonathan Z. Smith. "The Eternal Deferral" in *Hermeneutics, Politics and the History of Religions: The Contested Legacies of Joachim Wach and Mircea Eliade*, Christian K. Wedemeyer and Wendy Doniger, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 200.

<sup>237</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 64.

<sup>238</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 31.

<sup>239</sup> Firmilian Marin was Metropolitan of Oltenia from 1947-1972. Mircea Pacurariu. "Romanian Christianity" in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*. Ken Parry, ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 203.

<sup>240</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 92-93. Cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Biografice*, p. 66.

<sup>241</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 66.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

“From Crasna,” Plamadeala wrote, “I ran away once again to Bucharest, where the monks from the Monastery Antim sent me to Monastery Slatina from Moldova, to father Ilie Cleopa, one of the greatest spiritual people of Romania. Having found out the truth about me, father Cleopa told me: ‘Stay here. We are assuming responsibility together.’”<sup>243</sup> Plamadeala came to Cleopa with a letter of recommendation from Arsenie Papacioc. “No one knows, stay here, for me you are Antonie, a monk who comes from Prislop. I am welcoming you [here]; going forward no one knows anything,” replied Cleopa after being fully informed of Antonie’s delicate situation with the Securitate.<sup>244</sup>

Cleopa’s act of courage to permit a fugitive to stay at his monastery may not have been an exception after all. He was well known for his rebellious nature and openness to criticize the Communist regime. By early 1950s, Cleopa was already under Securitate’s surveillance, of which he was also aware. On 4 May 1948, Cleopa was interrogated for several days in Targu Neamt. Something he said during one of his sermons caught the attention of the regime. Judging from a note written on Cleopa by an informant nicknamed “Galina,” the message conveyed in his ecclesiastic discourses was most likely in disagreement with Securitate’s agenda. “Galina” described him as “hatemonger against the regime... [who] permanently presents himself in a hostile manner against the government.”<sup>245</sup> Securitate files also reveal his popularity among believers. Due to his charismatic character he was targeted by the Securitate in order to use him to encourage monastery visitors to embrace agricultural collectivization. Asked to speak at a cinema on this matter, he refused to comply stating that “priests can only talk about Christ.”<sup>246</sup> His stubbornness went to the point of once telling Securitate staff that “he speaks only in church and even Stalin or Petru Groza, if they need to, they must come to the monastery to speak to him.”<sup>247</sup>

At Slatina, Plamadeala worked as a teacher at a local monastic school. His experience in Baia Mare may have served him well in his new teaching position, where he had older students who were enrolled in that school in order to become monks. Among his other responsibilities, one worthy to be mentioned was his being appointed by Cleopa to meet and entertain the

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<sup>243</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 31.

<sup>244</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografic*, p. 67.

<sup>245</sup> Cosma Giosanu. *Duhovnicii Sihastriei sub Cenzura Comunistă* [Confessors of Hermitage Living under the Communis Censorship] (Cluj: Eikon, 2013), p. 52.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

pilgrims and visitors of the monastery, especially those of the highest intellectual caliber. Cleopa, when faced with such visitors, would always send Antonie to meet them: “these are intelligent people, I have no business to talk to them. You, the theologian, go. This is how they were calling me those from Slatina, Antonie the theologian, but not because I was a theologian, but because there was another Antonie who was preparing wafers and that one was called Antonie the wafer maker.”<sup>248</sup>

It seems that Sandu Tudor and Plamadeala crossed paths again in Slatina, despite the unfortunate discord among them that had taken place at the Crasna Monastery. Here, just like in Crasna, Sandu Tudor brought together intellectual monks, with the goal of reviving the *Rugul Aprins* movement he founded at the Monastery Antim, in Bucharest. Among those who took part in these highly mystical and spiritual gatherings worthy to be mentioned were Andrei Scrima,<sup>249</sup> Arsenie Papacioc, and Alexandru Mironescu, who would all later become important cultural figures in the Romanian Orthodox context.<sup>250</sup> Once again, Plamadeala was surrounded by the crème of the crop of the Romanian theological elite—a theme in Plamadeala’s life that would continue in a consistent manner even during his years in prison. There, he shared at one point a cell with no one other than the Prince Mavrocordat of Romania.<sup>251</sup> In the Prince’s company he learned English, which Plamadeala would use while pursuing his doctoral studies at Oxford in the early 1970s. Plamadeala’s life, it looks, was filled with unique and rather incredible contradictions: on the run from the Police and overwhelmed by fear of being caught, yet surrounded by the finest minds of his time; locked in prison yet tutored English by a member of the Romanian royalty.

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<sup>248</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 75. Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 70.

<sup>249</sup> Andrei Scrima (1925-2000) studied philosophy at the University of Bucharest, and in 1949 began studying theology. In 1956, he received a scholarship from the Ecumenical Institute from Geneva, which offered him the opportunity to study abroad in France. He lived in India and Lebanon and returned to Romania in 1991. Andrei Scrima. *Timpul Rugului Aprins* [Time of the Burning Bush] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2010).

<sup>250</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, p. 69.

<sup>251</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Basarabia*, p. 32.



## Chapter 4

### The arrest

#### *The arrest at the St. Parascheva feast in Iasi*

Plamadeala was arrested on October 15, 1954, approximately six years and three months from the days when the first arrests of his colleagues from the Department of Theology and the Veterinary School of the University of Bucharest occurred. The now twenty-eight year old Antonie was still a monk at the Slatina Monastery. His brother Mihai confirms that on that fall day Plamadeala was in the city of Iasi<sup>252</sup> at a high profile feast organized to honor St. Parascheva,<sup>253</sup> with the then Bulgarian Patriarch Cyril<sup>254</sup> among the event's distinguished guests. Plamadeala was arrested at or close to the end of that event.<sup>255</sup>

Seemingly taken from a plot of a film, the story of Plamadeala's arrest appears incredible, in at least an instance, for the debasing nature of the treatment he received while waiting to enter the Jilava prison.<sup>256</sup> Nevertheless, his story also exhibits moments of civility, followed by discourtesy, respect and pretentiousness from those who executed it. If looked at as a case study, Plamadeala's arrest offers some insight in the way in which Securitate skillfully carried out its operations while infiltrated into the apparent routine and mundane of the quotidian life of Romanians in the 1950s. To the oblivious eye, the scene may have looked like a friendly gathering of several acquaintances; to the one who was approached or better said, targeted— the

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<sup>252</sup> City in the north-eastern part of Romania, situated in the Moldavia (Moldova) region.

<sup>253</sup> The Romanian Orthodox Church considers this saint as the protector of Moldavia. Lucian Leustean. "Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism: an Introduction" in *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe*, Lucian Leustean, ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), p. 1.

<sup>254</sup> On 3 January 1951, Cyril, then Metropolitan of Plovdiv, was elected as Holy Synod's new vicegerent chairman. The move from the status of an Exarchate to a Patriarchate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was marked by the election of the former Metropolitan of Plovdiv as Patriarch. This occurred at the Third Council of the Church and the People, on 8-10 May 1953, in Sofia. Cyril was one of the three proposed for the Patriarchal seat, with Neophyte of Vidin and Clement of Stara Zagora as the other two potential candidates. Cyril was elected with 104 of the total 107 votes. The Metropolitan of Vidin, Neophyte, received a single vote. The remaining two votes were declared null. Cyril served as Patriarch until his death, on 7 March 1971. Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov. "Bulgarian Christianity" in *Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*. Ken Parry, ed. (Malden, MA; Wiley Blackwell, 2010), pp. 64-68.

<sup>255</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 29.

<sup>256</sup> Prison located 10 kilometers from Bucharest. Built in 1870-1890, with 18 forts, Jilava was initially designed to protect Bucharest against Ottoman invasions. Fort 13 Jilava was used as a deposit for ammunition until 1907, after which it became a military prison. In the years 1944-1948, Jilava was a military penitentiary; after 1948, it served as a civil prison, under the authority of the Ministry of Interior. From 1948 until 1964, the prison was used for the "transit or triage of counterrevolutionary detainees" awaiting trial or to be transferred at other prisons or labor camps. Some were locked at Jilava while they were brought from other prisons for Securitate interrogations. "Jilava" in *Dictionarul Penitenciarelor din Romania Comunistă, 1945-1967* (Dictionary of the Penitentiaries in Communist Romania, 1945-1967), Andrei Muraru, Clara Mares et. al. eds (Bucharest: Polirom, 2008), pp. 352-353.

beginning of a journey into the terrifying unknown.

In writing about this incident, it was my intent to honor Plamadeala's definition of the words "paradoxical" and "extraordinary" he provided in his *Three Hours in Hell*, wherein he suggests that they "mean nothing other than the incapacity to translate into words sentiments and conditions of the mind and of the heart."<sup>257</sup> "Paradoxical" and "extraordinary," at the same time, the arrest could have been justly narrated by also not ignoring these hidden "sentiments" and "conditions," which may be subtly inferred from the words and expressions the theologian used to talk about this incident, many years later after it took place.

According to the theologian, the two Securitate officers sent out to arrest him approached him in a civilized manner, most likely to not stir any unwanted attention from the public eye. Given the nature of the discussion that took place between them, the officers were most likely dressed in civil clothes, to further conceal themselves. The courtesy offered to Plamadeala may also have been triggered by the setting in which the arrest occurred. Plamadeala was among high profile guests, including a foreign visitor and head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The two officers may have been thoroughly instructed that they act in a manner to ensure that no one, and especially the Patriarch, would notice any disturbance that may have insinuated unrest, or a discord of some sort, which may have given the prominent visitor a poor impression of Romania and its government's treatment of its citizens. Plamadeala recalls the following details pertaining to his first encounter with these officers:

They asked me where my luggage was. "At the convent St. Spiridon, in Iasi." He said: "Alright, where exactly is it?" "Let me take you there. They got me into a Gaz truck<sup>258</sup> that was waiting at the gate. They had me seated between them, and I guided the driver until we reached the convent. ... There, I said: "Look, over here. I have a small sheepskin coat (cojocel); I have a hat." "This is exactly what you need," as it was late; it was October. And they let me enter [the convent]. ... There was a nun [in the convent], in charge, nun Benedicta Braga. I winked at the nun and told her: "Mother, take care of yourself, give me what you think I would need for a longer period! And the nun gave me her sheepskin coat. ... She realized what was going on; she wished me health; I got out the door and I got again inside the truck. It was 1954. They were polite; they waited for me there and they took me directly to the Securitate. They did not put on me those glasses, that are usually put on prisoners, when they move them from one place to another. ... They brought me in front of an iron gate. ... The iron gate opened and I entered into the prison yard. We walked up, maybe about 30 meters; there, they let me out; they brought me into a room; they took my belt, my shoe laces; they took my priestly clothes. They hung them. One of them grabbed me by the arm, and brought me to another building. He

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<sup>257</sup> Antonie Plamadeala. *Trei Ceasuri in Iad* (Three Hours in Hell) (Bucuresti: Editura Sophia, 2013), p. 54.

<sup>258</sup> Soviet truck, acronym for gorkovsky avtomobilnyy zavod (*Горьковский автомобильный завод*), in English, 'Gorky automobile plant'. Gorky is a city in Russia. The truck is also referred to as *gazushka*, which is the diminutive for Gaz. Dmitry Loza. *Fighting for the Soviet Motherland*. James E. Gelbhardt, ed. and trans. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), p. 242.

opened a door. Pushed me inside. I was in a [prison] cell. They were five other men there. The sixth bed was free. The beds were placed one on top of the other, in groups of three.<sup>259</sup>

The incident in the prison cell is intriguing for at least one reason, namely, for the conviction of those he met in it, most likely political prisoners like him, that he was somehow affiliated to a religious order even though he was not clothed as such. But most fascinatingly, the brief dialogue that follows reveals one of these prisoners' main preoccupations and discloses, also, the most likely reason why some of those locked at that Iasi penitentiary were incarcerated—adherence to the anti-Communist resistance:

They all jumped from their beds to ask me: "Father, what is going on, where do you come from, when were you arrested?" "Today, now." "How so, just now?" Then a very interesting discussion followed, from their point of view to find out what is going on outside. I, being a monk, unfortunately was not reading all the newspapers, so was not very helpful for them... [and could not tell] them whether Americans were coming, because this is what interested them. But then I told them: "Listen, I come from a reception." ... I told them about life in general. I stayed here for several hours. Then the door opened and a soldier gave me a sign to get out.<sup>260</sup>

Carried outside by the arm, Plamadeala entered the same room where he was asked only a few hours earlier to leave his priestly clothes. Another conversation followed, this time with a rather cordial Securitate officer.

"Take a seat." There was a Securitate officer dressed in uniform." "Good afternoon" I say. "Good afternoon," he says. "Take a seat, father." I took a seat. He stayed at his desk. He says: "Father, you must know I have nothing against you. I have nothing to ask you. We received orders to arrest you. We don't even know why we arrested you. Tonight you will be heading to Bucharest. ... "Why did you arrest me, officer?" He says: "Father, I don't know. I intended to ask you maybe you know why. But I need to tell you much more. You received seven years [to serve] in prison." I pretended to be frightened. I said: "I have been condemned? Since when?" "Well, you have been condemned since 1949." "Why didn't you catch me until now? I was always visible. I come now from the Monastery Slatina [where I took part]...at a feast with the Patriarch of Bulgaria. Why did you catch me now? You could have caught me for six years, since when you are telling me that I have been condemned?" "Let it be, let's not go into details."<sup>261</sup>

The fact that Plamadeala was arrested while attending a high profile event may suggest some sense of urgency on the part of the Romanian authorities. The officer's unawareness of the reason why he was arrested, and hence lack of familiarity with his Securitate file, may also imply that the decision to catch him was impromptu, per pressing orders from Bucharest. Judging from

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<sup>259</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 148-149.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

the literature written on Patriarch Cyril's ecumenical work abroad and frequent visits to countries with a predominantly Christian Orthodox population, with the goal of strengthening ties between the Bulgarian and other Orthodox Churches outside Bulgaria,<sup>262</sup> it is plausible to infer that his visit to Iasi may have been of that nature and scope as well, and hence of special interest to the Securitate. Executing a camouflaged arrest at this feast, with the risk of its not being carried out successfully, may have not been the most astute of decisions unless the targeted individual was of special interest to Securitate and the urgency of his being captured was at least of equal importance to the police as the peaceful unfolding of the ecclesiastic event at which Plamadeala was present on that day was.

#### *Mystery behind Plamadeala's arrest*

Furthermore, two other questions come to one's awareness about Plamadeala's detention. Specifically, why did it take Securitate six years to catch him, and was this fortunate delay caused solely by Securitate's failure to confirm with certainty that Leonida and Antonie Plamadeala were one and the same person? The proposed reason may possibly explain a delay of a year, but less likely six. Securitate was aware of Plamadeala's whereabouts at the Prislop Monastery in 1950, for example, where the police could have certainly confirmed with the monks residing at this monastery the new name Leonida received when he entered the monastic life. If the name change was not the cause of this delay, another credible cause was Plamadeala's clever approach to finding hiding spots and timely decisions to leave them prior to the days when Securitate officers arrived to arrest him. If the suggested explanation is reflective of some truth, Plamadeala most definitely received some assistance from other individuals in being informed when Securitate was within the proximity of the location where he was and in being successfully hidden if Securitate officials were visiting the respective place.

#### *The Vladimiresti controversy*

A pressing question remains, nevertheless—why such urgency? Historian Adrian Petcu infers that Plamadeala's involvement in the crisis at the Vladimiresti Monastery<sup>263</sup> may have

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<sup>262</sup> See for example Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov, "Bulgarian Christianity" in *Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, Ken Parry, ed. (Malden, MA; Wiley Blackwell, 2010), pp. 67-68.

<sup>263</sup> The nunnery was founded by mother Veronica Gurau, formerly known as Vasilica, an orphan from the village Vladimirescu. She claimed to have had a vision of Jesus Christ and Mary sometimes in the summer of 1937. In this vision, Jesus asked Vasilica to build a monastery in the name of the Mother of God for the "redemption of

been the cause. I refer to the respective phenomenon as a ‘crisis’ for the monastery’s rather heretical tendencies in both dogma and liturgical practice and for its overt opposition to the Communist state.<sup>264</sup> Led by the priest Ioan Iovan and the nuns Mihaela Iordache<sup>265</sup> and Veronica Gurau, the monastery was seen by the Orthodox Church leadership as controversial in its theological teachings and practice of the sacraments. For this, at one point, Plamadeala overtly called these nuns and priest “rebels.”<sup>266</sup> He named them in this way for their refusal to meet with the then Patriarch Justinian Marina to address the allegations against the so-called religious aberrations practiced at Vladimiresti.<sup>267</sup>

In an informer note written on 20 June 1970 by agent “Marinescu Gheorghe,” Arsenie Papacioc described “that which took place at Vladimiresti” as “a shame for our [Orthodox] church; Ioan [Iovan] and Veronica [Iordache] were and are criminals (scelerati) who took advantage of the innocence and the faith of believers. How can you, as a priest, receive and hide at your monastery bandits who have nothing in common with human decency (omenie)?”<sup>268</sup> Having not consulted the Securitate files on the arrest, trial and interrogations carried out with these nuns and monks from Vladimiresti, I find it difficult to conclude with certainty what Papacioc was referring to in his statement about the “bandits” hidden at this monastery. Information provided in the same Securitate note reveals, however, that nun Mihaela was a Legionary, leading one to conclude that the “bandits” they were hiding may have been adherents of the Legion as well.<sup>269</sup>

Papacioc’s reference to those hidden by nun Mihaela at Vladimiresti as “bandits” may

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Romania.” Gabriel Hanganu, “‘Photo Cross’: The Political and Devotional Lives of a Romanian Orthodox Photograph” in *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds. (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 152.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>265</sup> A Securitate note provided by informant “Marinescu Gheorghe” about a discussion he held with Arsenie Papacioc on 20 June 1970 discloses that Ioan Iovan and Mihaela Iordache were later arrested by Securitate, and the Vladimiresti monastery was abolished. ACNSAS, fond. 185003, vol. 2, pp. 354-361, cited in *Am Inteles Rostul Meu...Parintele Papacioc in Dosarele Securitatii* [I understood my purpose. Father Papcioc in Securitate files] Andrei Tudor, Mariana Conovici, and Iuliana Conovici, eds. (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2014), pp. 242-243.

<sup>266</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu, *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 73.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> ACNSAS, fond. 185003, vol. 2, pp. 354-361, cited in *Am Inteles Rostul Meu...Parintele Papacioc*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>269</sup> In the same note, “Marinescu Gheorghe” reports that Papacioc acknowledged that he was a Legionary and served time in prison for his ties to this movement. But, more interestingly, according to Papacioc, he has not been rehabilitated or pardoned for this crime as others have been. He cites the following people as examples of those who have been pardoned and granted privileges by the State: “Metropolitan Mladin of Ardeal, Metropolitan of Moldova and Antonie Plamadeala, who is now travelling throughout many Western countries and is sent out to study in England.” ACNSAS, fond. 185003, vol. 2, pp. 354-361, cited in *Am Inteles Rostul Meu...Parintele Papacioc* pp. 240-241.

not have been too far-fetched. Gabriel Hanganu confirms that the monastery was “used to shelter ‘enemies of the state’”<sup>270</sup> and that it became at one point “an embarrassment to government and politburo.”<sup>271</sup> The liturgical discrepancies practiced at Vladimiresti may have been, therefore, secondary to the problem this nunnery represented to both the State and the Church in terms of the convent’s overt opposition to religious persecution and the Church’s compliance with and acquiescence to the Communist authorities.

Ioan Iovan, who joined the monastery in 1947,<sup>272</sup> was the key voice behind this opposition. The hostility towards the regime was two-fold: bold and clear, via Ioan’s “anti-state” preaching<sup>273</sup> and subtle yet even more powerful, via the monastery’s distribution of its so-called ‘photo-cross’ postcards<sup>274</sup> to its pilgrims who visited the monastery each year, artifacts that had a strong political message associated to them.<sup>275</sup>

In 1955, Iovan sent a letter addressed to the Communist state, in which he made sharp accusations against the regime’s heavy interference in people’s individual religious practices and the Church’s docile approach to the State’s policies towards the Church. This letter led to his and nun Veronica’s arrest in 1955 and the closing of the monastery, shortly after their incarceration.<sup>276</sup> It is the ‘photo-cross’ artifacts, however, that were perceived by the State as

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<sup>270</sup> Gabriel Hanganu. ‘Photo Cross’ The Political and devotional lives of a Romanian Orthodox photograph” in *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds. (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 152.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> The “photo-cross” is a 5x7 inch postcard, representing a black and white photographic imagery of a collage of seven carefully chosen images, placed on a frame in the shape of a cross. Around the cross there are three other images, placed in three of the corners of the postcard. Two of these three images are of those of divine or saintly beings, such as Jesus or Mother of God. Each of the seven images within the cross-shaped frame is provided a title. These captions are: “1) Crucea din porumb. Locul primei vedenii dumnezeiesti (The cross in the corn field. The place of the first divine revelation); 2) Bordeiul. Inceputul vietii calugaresti (The hut. The beginning of the monastic life); 3) Paraclisul. Primul locas de inchinare (The small church. The first veneration site); 4) Biserica Mare. Vedere interior (The big church. Interior view); 5) M. Stareta Veronica Intemeietoarea Manastirii (Mother Veronica, superior and founder of the nunnery); 6) M. Veronica in mijlocul soborului (Mother Veronica amongst the monastic community); 7) M. Veronica vorbind credinciosilor (Mother Veronica preaching to the faithful).” Gabriel Hanganu. ‘Photo Cross’ The Political and devotional lives of a Romanian Orthodox photograph” in *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds. (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 152.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>276</sup> By 1956, the Vladimiresti Monastery was already dismantled. Marius Oprea. “The Final Offensive: “The Socialist Transformation of Agriculture” from Slogans to Reality” (1953-1962) in *Transforming Peasants, Property and Power: The Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania, 1949-1962*. Constantin Iordachi and Dorin Dobrinu, eds. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), pp. 61-62. Gabriel Hanganu confirms that the monastery was closed in 1955(Hanganu, “Photo Cross”, p. 152).

more potentially harmful, as they were meant to depict symbolically and, therefore remind its owner of, the repressed state of the Church within the Communist context. Distributed extensively to the nunnery's numerous visitors and pilgrims, these at first sight innocuous postcards representing a montage of several religious images began to be seen, by 1959, as an "active enemy in the eyes of the regime and arguably even the simple possession of a copy could become incriminatory for its owner."<sup>277</sup>

From the Securitate documents consulted thus far, it is unclear what was the nature of Plamadeala's relation with the monk and nuns at Vladimiresti. It seems, that Plamadeala maintained contact with them throughout the years he resided at Slatina monastery. Furthermore, Plamadeala visited Vladimiresti on several occasions, in 1949, when he first met Bartolomeu Anania, and in 1951. There, Petcu confirms, Plamadeala "was carrying out discussions with nun Mihaela Iordache and monk Ioan Iovan."<sup>278</sup> Petcu also writes that "it is possible that Antonie wanted to enter the Vladimiresti monastery, because at that time [1949] it represented, nevertheless, a model for Romanian Orthodox monasticism."<sup>279</sup>

A day before Plamadeala's arrest, on 14 October 1954, Plamadeala helped draft a letter entitled "Letter addressed to the Holy Monastery Vladimiresti," which put forward "scripture and patristic-based arguments" addressing the "dogmatic, liturgical and canonical errors" of this monastery.<sup>280</sup> Given my lack of familiarity with the Securitate files concerning the Vladimiresti controversy, it is impossible to explain why the letter triggered in some ways the monk's arrest, as Petcu suggests.<sup>281</sup> If the latter interpretation is reflective of some truth, then one may look at this epistolary note in relation to Securitate's interest in arresting him as, to use an Arabic saying, "the last straw that broke the camel's back." In this case, it is possible to speculate that Securitate may have perceived Plamadeala's association with Vladimiresti as potentially "dangerous," due to Vladimiresti's anti-statal and anti-communist activity and rhetoric. Arresting those with ties to this monastery's leadership may have been necessary for Securitate in order to crush the anti-Communist movement within.

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<sup>277</sup> Hanganu. "Photo Cross," p. 153.

<sup>278</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 72.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

*From Iasi to Bucharest and then to Jilava Prison*

In Iasi, Plamadeala was informed that he would be sent that same night to Bucharest, in a train carrying civilians. The two officers accompanying him were disguised once again in civilian clothes. Below is Plamadeala's recollection of the Iasi to Bucharest trip he took, on the night of 15 October 1954, a roughly 400 kilometers long journey, which lasted at least 8 hours:

They [the same officers who arrested Plamadeala] brought me to the train station. They got with me in the train. In the [train] compartment, there were three free spaces, on one side and the other. I sat in the middle and each of them on each side. Even [while in] the car they told me: "Father, we will go to Bucharest by train. Please be very careful. You don't know us. We have precise orders. If you try [to do] something in the train, we will be obliged to take measures and, here, [look] we got revolvers. So you are going with us to Bucharest as an average citizen. You discuss whatever you want with those from the compartment. If you want to use the WC,<sup>282</sup> you go ahead. One of us will get out in the hallway, as if by chance. You behave like a free citizen."<sup>283</sup> And this is what I did.

From Bucharest, Plamadeala was taken to the Jilava prison, which is located roughly 15 km from Bucharest. On the way there, the car carrying him stopped at the Ministry of Interior, then at the Rahova prison,<sup>284</sup> with the final destination—Jilava. This trip Plamadeala narrated as following:

We got to Bucharest. We went to the military office (comenduire). At that time, there was a military office in each train station. We headed there. There, there were only military personnel. We stood there for a few minutes and two officers appeared, and, as through eye contact, they discussed: "Is this he?" "Is this he?" Those two did not even say goodbye to each other! I don't know if I said anything. The other two grabbed me by the arms. We got out from the military office; we got out from the North Train Station (Gara de Nord). A car was waiting for us and it was the first time they put those glasses [on me]. One was standing on one side and another, on the other, with guns or automatic shotguns. They put on the glasses with which I remained till the night-time. The only thing I could see was through the edge of those glasses; I think we first went to the [Ministry of] Interior, where now the Senate is. Then we went to another place. I think at Rahova [prison] from where they had to take more papers. This is what one of them said: "We are stopping here to grab some papers." Then we went for a long time by car until we got to the place where they told me: "Take off your glasses." I took off my glasses. When I looked [around], I was in front of the Fort Jilava. I recognized it in this way from descriptions. Before the entrance through the respective gates, there were some wooden cabins, similar to the cabins where ladies enter to try their dresses, in other words, of this size they were. They jabbed me there. They closed the door. It was made of wood, lime-washed, [made of wooden] boards; miserable. On the floor, there were feces. Of course, there was no chair. There was nothing. They locked the door from the outside with a latch, and they kept me there till night time, but till late at night, until after nine pm, standing up. After nine o'clock, the latch was unlocked and [someone] said: "Get out." Others took me, again by the arms, without the glasses. The big gate did not open, but a small gate from the Jilava [prison]. I entered. I saw the fort; then I saw the Jilava Fort from the outside. I entered through the main entrance. It was a large entrance. You walked several meters, after which the left and the right side [of the fort] began. I learned,

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<sup>282</sup> WC stands for water closet or bathroom.

<sup>283</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 150.

<sup>284</sup> In a 1955 Free Europe Committee report written, written about "Forced Labor in "People's Democracies", Rahova prison is described as "prison camp and distribution center; inmates work in prison workshops. Rahova I for civilians only. Rahova III for POWs, including 6,000 Germans who were released March 1952." Richard K. Carlton. *Forced Labor in "People's Democracies."* (New York: Free Europe Committee, 1955), p. 176.



later, that the right side was for those who were undergoing trial, and the left side, for those who went through trial and eventually had to be freed. I first passed through the right side; they brought me at cell 9 from Jilava. They suspected that I would request a trial.<sup>285</sup>

In a 1955 Free Europe Committee report written, as its title “Forced Labor in “People’s Democracies” suggests, about forced labor in the newly formed Communist states, a chapter is dedicated to Romania. In it, one finds an extensive list of prisons and labor camps present in the years 1948-1954 in this country and the type of prisoners each of these institutions held. This report identifies the “Ministry of Interior,” where Plamadeala was briefly stopped on his way to Jilava, as a “prison, mostly [a] transit center”<sup>286</sup> destined for “security interrogations”<sup>287</sup> while Jilava is described as the “largest prison for political offenders...noted for bad treatment.”<sup>288</sup> It is here where Plamadeala would spend the majority of his prison years, until his release in 1956. The following two chapters will discuss his years in prison.

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<sup>285</sup> *Aminirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 151.

<sup>286</sup> Richard K. Carlton. *Forced Labor in “People’s Democracies.”* (New York: Free Europe Committee, 1955), p. 173.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter 5 Trial and prison discharge

### “Faculty” Jilava

Plamadeala’s life during the years on the run from Securitate and while in prison was defined by inconsistencies. In difficult circumstances, at times marked by fear or uncertainty, Plamadeala found himself in the company of some of Romania’s most prominent individuals of his time. In prison, this was especially evident. The successful outcome of his trial may have been partially caused by the legal advice obtained from Emil Hatieganu (1878-1959), Romania’s former Minister of Interior<sup>289</sup> and once leader of the Peasant Party.<sup>290</sup> Plamadeala’s resilience, as he insinuates from his recollections of these years, may have been nurtured by his friendship with Corneliu Coposu (1914-1995),<sup>291</sup> a former leader of the National Peasant Party<sup>292</sup> who served 17 years in prison<sup>293</sup> and was once secretary of Iuliu Maniu (1873-1953).<sup>294</sup> The latter was Romania’s premier in the late 1920s and early 1930s, imprisoned by the Communist regime, on treason charges.<sup>295</sup> Both Hatieganu and Coposu were at one point Plamadeala’s cellmates at

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<sup>289</sup> Alexandru Osca. “Cehoslovacia ’68-O Forma de Manifestare a Crizei Sistemului Comunist” [Czechoslovakia’68—A Type of Manifestation of the Crisis of the Communist System] in *Istorie si Societate* [History and Society], Vol. 1, Marusia Cirstea, Sorin Liviu Damian and Doru Liciu, eds (Bucharest: editura Mica Valahie, 2011), p. 471.

<sup>290</sup> Barbara Jelavich. *History of the Balkans. Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 291.

<sup>291</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 170-177.

<sup>292</sup> The National Peasant party emerged in 1926 as a result of the merging of the National Party and the Peasant Party. Lavinia Stan. “From Riches to Rags: The Romanian Christian Democrat Peasant Party” in *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 39, Issue 2, Summer 2005, p. 179.

<sup>293</sup> Robert Levy. *The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), p. 284; Cristina Petrescu and Dragos Petrescu. “Mastering vs. Coming to Terms with the Past: A Critical Analysis of Post-Communist Romanian Historiography” in *Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, Sorin Antohi, Balazs Trencsenyi, et al. (Budapest: CEU Press, 2007), p. 359; Alan J. Day, Roger East and Richard Thomas. *A Political and Economic Dictionary of Eastern Europe* (London: Europa Publications, 2002), p. 111.

<sup>294</sup> Cristina Petrescu. “The Afterlife of the Securitate: On Moral Correctness in Postcommunist Romania” in *Remembering Communism: Private and Public Recollections of Lived Experience in Southeast Europe*, Maria Todorova, Augusta Dimou et al. (New York: Central European University Press, 2014), p. 404.

<sup>295</sup> Iuliu Maniu was also the leader of the National Party, which played a major role in the 1918 unification of Transylvania with Romania. Maniu pursued an education in law in Vienna and later practiced law in the city of Blaj where he was also a professor at the Theological Institute. As a leader of the National Party in Transylvania and, later, of the National Peasant Party, Maniu gained great popularity and visibility during the interbellum period. During his first term as prime minister (1928-1931) he was closely involved in restoring the status of monarch to Prince Carol. The Prince’s coming in power as Carol II led to further internal unrest and added to Romania’s instability on the international front. In September 1940, Carol II yielded his throne to his son Michael, whom Maniu supported in his coup against Antonescu in August 1944. Because of his connections with the Allies during World War II, Maniu was perceived as a threat to the Communist regime and was arrested and sentenced to life in prison. Lavinia Stan. “From Riches to Rags: The Romanian Christian Democrat Peasant Party” in *East European*

Jilava.

Mihai Plamadeala described Jilava as a “true school of political prisoners (it was nicknamed the ‘faculty’ [by the inmates]). The prisoners were in the majority of cases intellectuals of great worth. Immediately after incarceration, Antonie was taken under their wings and [he] learned what he had to do. [When Antonie arrived at Jilava,] there were professors, lawyers, and high-ranking officers; there were even two princes: Mavrocordat and Sturdza,<sup>296</sup> both members of various Romanian princely families. The camaraderie prevalent among the prisoners and the prison setting which reduced them, literally overnight, to a status of temporary social equality, may have nurtured in Plamadeala a strong credence in one’s ability to decide one’s destiny, even behind prison bars. In his memoirs, Plamadeala identified the “intellectuals” as the ones with the highest resilience among all inmates:

The intellectuals resisted the best at beatings and at the most perfidious of torments. Those who gave up, I am sorry to say it, but those who gave up after the first slap on the face were the peasants. Peasants are afraid of beatings. Ask everyone who was in [prison] cells with peasants and you will see that in many cases peasants gave up (au cedat). Maybe it is the virtue of the specific belief [they have], of a kind of special philosophy about their destiny, as it was the case of [my] father. [My] father, for example, when I ran from Prislop [monastery], as I told you that he met me at the train station in Bucharest, because I could not go home, [my] father, as the peasant he was, told me: “Well, son, you can’t do anything, just surrender!” This was his peasant way of thinking! This is how peasants acted in prisons; they gave up at the first slap on the face. Intellectuals resisted the best. Paradoxically!<sup>297</sup>

The theologian’s thoughtful evaluation of the intellectuals’ strength in facing physical and psychological abuse resonates with Victor Frankl’s observations of a similar phenomenon. This renowned psychiatrist remarked in his *Man’s Search for Meaning* that one’s resilience in a concentration camp did not necessarily depend on one’s physical strength; instead, it was often defined by one’s mental attitude towards a certain situation. This he explained in the following manner: “Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”<sup>298</sup>

Furthermore, Plamadeala’s resilience while in prison may have been cultivated by a calculated strategy, designed per the advice and support of Hatieganu and Coposu. This strategy

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*Quarterly*, Vol. 39, Issue 2, Summer 2005, p. 179; Charles King. “Maniu, Iuliu (1873-1953) in *Europe since 1945: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, Bernard Cook, ed. (New York: Garland, 2001), pp. 827-828; and Martin Ebon. *World Communism Today* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), p. 93.

<sup>296</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 30.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>298</sup> Victor Frankl. *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Toronto: Pocket Books, 1984), p. 86.

was threefold: the request of a retrial of his case; adopting at all times and at all costs, even in case of torture, an attitude of denial of any accusation inferred or openly stated by Securitate during prison interrogations or during the trial; and holding on to one's initial statements, without changing any statement, throughout the entire process of retrial, so as to provide no ground for the prosecutors or judges to bring new accusations or evidence that would further incriminate him.

### *Request for retrial*

As per Hatieganu's suggestion, Plamadeala requested a retrial in the first week after his arrival at Jilava.<sup>299</sup> The handwritten letter<sup>300</sup> sent to the Military Tribunal in Bucharest justified his request on the basis that he was tried in 1949 *in absentia* for "conspiracy against the social order, according to article 209,<sup>301</sup> paragraph III"<sup>302</sup> and, hence, was not given the chance to prove his innocence against the accusations put forth by the prosecutors. In the note dating from 20 October 1954, Plamadeala alleged that he never knew of the existence of a conviction and never hid from authorities, which, as the letter stated, were aware of his whereabouts during the six

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<sup>299</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 79.

<sup>300</sup> The note stated the following: "The undersigned Plamadeala V. Leonida from village Draceni, Raion Falticeni, Suceava region, hieromonk, professor at Slatina Monastery, from Draceni village, has the honor to bring to your attention the following: 1. I was arrested on 15 October 1954 and placed at the Jilava Penitentiary, where I was informed that I was sentenced in absentia to serve 7 years in prison, in 1949, charged with "a conspiracy offense (delict de uneltire) against the social order" on the basis of art[icle] 209. 2. Throughout my entire life as a pupil and university student, as well as a professional, I did not know anyone about whom I would have known that belongs to any group that would conspire against the social order. In regards to myself, I never was involved in an activity against the social order and I never was part of a group [with that goal]. 3. Considering that I was tried in absentia, I ask you to kindly approve my retrial so that I would be given the possibility to prove before the court the things which I have affirmed above. 4. Also, I am asking to take note that from the moment when I was convicted until the arrest, from 1949 until 1954, I never hid from authorities, because I never knew I was guilty and I did not know of the existence of any conviction that was wavering upon me. I always had a legal home address, with a personal id[entification] card (buletin de identitate), legal, issued by the police. Also, I was employed by several state organizations as: high school teacher, assistant at monasteries...receiving a salary.... I was known by all local authorities with whom I worked in complete harmony until the date of the arrest. All these I show as extra proof that I did not know anything about the existence of any conviction. In consequence, with respect, I kindly request [your] approval of a retrial of my case." ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 2.

<sup>301</sup> From 1948 to 1960, article 209, paragraph III reads as follows: "Those who initiate, organize, activate in or participate at fascist, political, military and paramilitary organizations are punished with forced labor from 5 to 25 years and civic degradation from 2 to 10 years. See Octavian Roske. "Accente in Strategia Colectivizarii. Articolul 209 Cod Penal" (Important Details Concerning the Collectivization Strategy. Article 209 [of the] Penal Code) in *Arhivele Totalitarismului* (Archives of Totalitarianism), 1994, Nr. 1-2, p. 281.

<sup>302</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 43.

years following his 1949 trial. After his second note,<sup>303</sup> sent to the Territorial Military Tribunal of Bucharest (Tribunalul Teritorial Militar Bucuresti) with a similar content as the one dating from 20 October 1949, Plamadeala's tactic proved fruitful.<sup>304</sup> The Tribunal granted him a retrial,<sup>305</sup> the date of which was set for 9 March 1955.<sup>306</sup>

In preparation for this hearing, Antonie presented a handwritten letter to the president of the Tribunal<sup>307</sup> with evidence supporting his declarations from his two earlier notes. The enclosed certificates brought forth with his third letter sought to demonstrate that the police knew of his whereabouts in the years 1948-1949, when the other students who were tried in the same dossier as Plamadeala were arrested and when his colleagues were convicted. Based on this evidence, Plamadeala sought to demonstrate that the authorities were responsible for his absence during the 1949 trial, not having notified him, and, as a result, he deserved a retrial.

The following documents were made available: Plamadeala's identification card, with number 64212, issued by Falticeni Police; a copy of a 1949 document which proves that he was a teacher in Baia Mare and that his home address was known to authorities; membership card in the National Students Union of Romania (UNSR-Uniunea Nationala a Studentilor din Romania) which shows that he was a theology student in the years 1947-1948 and not a medical student, as he is inaccurately "considered in the dossier"<sup>308</sup>; and certificate number 272/950 about his employment at the Baia Mare Technical School (Scoala Profesionala din Baia Mare). In the letter Plamadeala cites two more documents as further proof in respect to this matter: his Romanian citizenship certificate issued by Tribunal of Ilfov<sup>309</sup> on 10 September 1948 and of a certificate dating from 1 October 1949 which released Plamadeala from the army conscription due to his admission into monastic life.<sup>310</sup> The letter ends with Plamadeala's request to consult

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<sup>303</sup> The letter dated from 24 November 1954. In it, Plamadeala reiterates the claims he presented in his letter from 20 October and requests a retrial on the same grounds as the ones presented in his earlier letter. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 151. Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 80.

<sup>304</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 5.

<sup>305</sup> The decision was taken on 18 January 1955. The note in which the retrial was approved was signed by Major General Petrescu Alexandru. Plamadeala's lawyer at the 18 January 1955 hearing was Comanescu Stelian. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, pp. 12-17.

<sup>306</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, pp. 80-81. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 32.

<sup>307</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 21.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> County which surrounds Romania's capital, Bucharest.

<sup>310</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, pp. 21-31.

his dossier prior to the April 13 court date and to speak to his lawyer.<sup>311</sup>

At the March 9 hearing Plamadeala did not have a lawyer. On that day the Tribunal asked that Vaman Constantin, Ion Pavel and Constantin Nistor be transferred to Jilava and be brought to the new court hearing, set for April 13.<sup>312</sup> Plamadeala requested the presence of Constantin at his hearing to serve as a witness in support of his defense. To remind the reader, Vaman Constantin and Ion Pavel were the only two students who denounced Plamadeala during the 1948 interrogations, claiming he was a Legionary.<sup>313</sup> Their presence at this trial was imperative for the defendant, but even more important for the prosecutors whose case was built on these individuals' statements.<sup>314</sup> The April 13 hearing did not prove successful, once again. This time, neither the witnesses nor the defendant were present. A new hearing date was set for May 18, as Constantin Nistor was nowhere to be found.<sup>315</sup>

#### *Galati prison and the interrogations related to Vladimiresti*

On day prior to his court date, on April 12, Plamadeala was transferred to the Galati penitentiary,<sup>316</sup> a “major prison for political prisoners and distribution center for agricultural projects,”<sup>317</sup> for further interrogations.<sup>318</sup> In chapter 4, I mentioned that there may have been a connection between the Vladimiresti controversy and Plamadeala's arrest only a day after his writing of the twenty-page letter<sup>319</sup> addressed to father Iovan and nun Mihaela about the dogmatic and scriptural deviations noticed at the monastery in the early 1950s. The purpose of

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<sup>311</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>312</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 32.

<sup>313</sup> In a 8 December 1949 Securitate document prepared for the Bucharest Military Tribunal, Plamadeala is listed as the fourteenth student on the list of the thirty accused students, with the following concluding sentence pertaining to his crime: “student [in] the third year at the Faculty of Medicine in 1947-1948, took part in the organization, initiated in the group [which met at] the Matei Voievod dorms, led by Villa Petre, together with Ghitescu Ioan and Carstoiu Iulian. Both Vaman Constantin and Pavel Ion in declarations dating from August 20, 1948 confirm his participation in the organization.” ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 12.

<sup>314</sup> At the March 9 hearing, the Tribunal also assigned Doljan Constantin as the defense lawyer. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, pp. 32, 37.

<sup>315</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 81. At this hearing, Plamadeala's lawyer was Preda Gheorghe. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 43.

<sup>316</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 81

<sup>317</sup> Richard K. Carlton. *Forced Labor in “People's Democracies.”* (New York: Free Europe Committee, 1955), p. 174.

<sup>318</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 81. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 44, 53.

<sup>319</sup> *Amintirile Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala.* [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 162.

the interrogations in Galati, as confirmed by Plamadeala, was to question him about his connections with Iovan and Mihaela and his ties to the Legionary movement.<sup>320</sup> Plamadeala's surprise relocation to Galati on the eve of his hearing may be explained by a possible lack of communication between the Tribunal and the prison system. Or, it may divulge Securitate's underlying interest in arresting him after a delay of six years—quelling the Vladimiresti crisis by incarcerating everyone who may have had any contact with this monastery. From the theologian's recollections about his experiences in Galati, the latter proposed explanation may be the more likely one: the 1949 conviction may have been the *de jure* cause of his arrest, while the Vladimiresti controversy—the *de facto* one.

In a conversation with Romanian journalists about his life, Plamadeala described Vladimiresti's religious deviations as following:

Vladimiresti somewhat deviated (cam o luase pe alaturi) with some church related issues, to the point that Patriarch Justinian withdrew his support for (s-a dezis de) them. There were some exaggerations in what they were doing.... they were giving communion (dadeau impartasanie) to everyone, they were giving communion to the dogs, things as these are gross; then, the leadership of the monastery was arrested... Vladimiresti was considered as a very strong Legionary nest.<sup>321</sup>

In Jilava, the Securitate interrogations were carried out with the scope of accusing Plamadeala of ties to the Legion, allegations to which he responded in the subsequent manner:

“How can I be, Sir, a Legionary, when around that time I was only 12 years old?”<sup>322</sup> Or how could I have been a Legionary during the Legionary state in Romania, when I was in Bessarabia, under the Russians?<sup>323</sup> To the point that at this question they gave up; it was absurd for them to have followed this line [of thought]. “You want to believe me? I never saw a green shirt.”<sup>324</sup> I never read a line from a Legionary book. I was a

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<sup>320</sup> *Ibid*, p. 163.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid*, p. 161.

<sup>322</sup> Plamadeala was referring to the year 1938. The Legion thrived in the 1930s until 1938, when it underwent government repression. From 1938 to 1940, it was an underground operation. The Iron Guard came to power with General Ion Antonescu, as a result of King Carol II's abdication. Irina Livezeanu. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 296; Roland Clark. *European Fascists and Local Activists: Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael (1922-1938)*, unpublished doctoral thesis defended at the University of Pittsburgh in 2012, pp. 7-9.

<sup>323</sup> On 2 August 1940, the Soviet Union occupied from Romania. Bessarabia was regained by Romania a year later. Bertrand D. Wolfe *Six Keys to the Soviet System* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), p. 234.

<sup>324</sup> The green shirt was the Legionary uniform. The other elements of the Legionaries' uniform included Sam Browne belts, black pants tucked into high leather boots. I. C. Butnaru. *Waiting for Jerusalem: Surviving the Holocaust in Romania* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 231; Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery. *Peasants under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 177; and William I. Burstein. *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe before Holocaust* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 158.

child.”<sup>325</sup>

When these attempts failed, Securitate attempted to demonstrate that he may have had ties to Legionaries via his connections with the leadership at Vladimiresti monastery. This evidence may have been necessary for his retrial but also for Securitate’s own investigations of the leadership from this monastery. Plamadeala, as a result, may have been an important element in two, rather than one, Securitate investigations. And whereas the spreading of the “Fрати Crestini” manifestos in April of 1948 may have been the outward cause behind his arrest, it was the Vladimiresti controversy that may have made Plamadeala an important target for Romania’s secret police, when he was arrested in 1954.

In Galati, Securitate officers first interrogated Plamadeala alone. There he was accused once again of ties to the Legion, allegations which, as the theologian pointed out, some accepted as true for the sake of “escaping” (sa scape)<sup>326</sup> the interrogations. When these investigations proved ineffective, Securitate placed him in the same cell with Ioan Iovan, and monitored their conversations, which as Plamadeala confirms, limited to only theological matters. Later, Plamadeala was placed in the same room with Roman Braga, both facing opposite walls. Braga was made to confess that Plamadeala was a Legionary, to which Plamadeala’s colleague replied: “Yes, Major, I was part of the Legionary movement. I am older than father [Plamadeala] by 4, 5 years. I was part of the Blood Brotherhoods (fratiile de trupa/cruce), as far as he is concerned, he could not have been... He was not, pure and simple, a Legionary.”<sup>327</sup> Lastly, when this attempt also proved futile, Plamadeala, described by one of the Securitate officers as someone who embraced the answer “no,”<sup>328</sup> and was placed under an office table (birou) while Mihaela Iordache was interrogated in the same room where he was hidden. Just like Braga, Ioan Iovan and Mihaela Iordache denied Plamadeala’s ties to the movement and admitted that these two carried out with the young monk discussions concerning only theological matters.<sup>329</sup> The Galati interrogations, as later evidence brought during Plamadeala’s trial shows, proved to be a failure for Securitate’s attempt to build a case against Plamadeala and his assumed ties to the Legionary movement.

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<sup>325</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 162.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 164-166.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*



*Court hearing without the presence of Plamadeala*

By May 18, Pavel Ionel and Vaman Constantin were brought to Jilava,<sup>330</sup> from Gherla prison, where “many school teachers and lawyers ended up.”<sup>331</sup> Here the government jailed many kulaks,<sup>332</sup> political prisoners and students, who were, as a 1955 Free Europe report described, “employed on public works.”<sup>333</sup> Plamadeala, on the other hand, could not be present at this proceeding,<sup>334</sup> as he was still at that time in Galati. Pavel Ionel and Vaman Constantin were also absent, with Dinu Voinescu as Plamadeala’s new defense lawyer present before the Tribunal.<sup>335</sup> In a document issued about what took place in court that day, it is noted that the “accused’s lawyer shows that on 12 April 1955 [Plamadeala] was taken to Galati prison and asked for a deadline (termen) so that his transferring [to Jilava] may be requested.”<sup>336</sup> Furthermore, Voinescu asked that information from Gherla be provided in respect Nistor Constantin’s likely death at this penitentiary.<sup>337</sup> This is because only a week or two earlier Securitate received a note from the Chief of the Military Post from Neagra Sarului<sup>338</sup> about this student. The document dating from 1 May 1955 states that Nistor Constantin was arrested by Securitate from Vatra Dornei in 1949, and “since then nothing is known about him.”<sup>339</sup> His parents also claimed that they “heard a rumor that he died, but it is not known for certain.”<sup>340</sup> A new court hearing was set for 29 June 1955.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 57.

<sup>331</sup> Dennis Deletant. *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 28-29.

<sup>332</sup> Soviet term for ‘wealthy peasant,’ also known in Romanian as *chiabur*. Gail Kligman. “Creating Communist Authority: Class Warfare and Collectivization in Ieud (Maramures Region)” in *Transforming Peasants, Property and Power: The Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania, 1949-1962*, Constantin Iordachi and Dorin Dobrinu, eds. (Budapest: Central European University, 2009), p. 172.

<sup>333</sup> Richard K. Carlton. *Forced Labor in “People’s Democracies.”* (New York: Free Europe Committee, 1955), p. 175.

<sup>334</sup> On 12 May 1955, personnel from Galati prison sent a note to the Military Tribunal from Bucharest informing it that Plamadeala will be brought in time to Jilava for his 18 May 1955 hearing. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 59.

<sup>335</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 58.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> Region in Suceava County, in Bucovina.

<sup>339</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 49.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>341</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 58. Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, pp. 80-81.

### *Court hearings following the Vladimiresti-related interrogations*

At the June 29 hearing, Plamadeala came “in state of arrest, being assisted by his defense, lawyer Dinu Voinescu. Also present were witnesses of the prosecutor Vaman Constantin and Pavel Ioan, both arrested at the Jilava penitentiary.”<sup>342</sup> At this hearing, while Plamadeala maintained his initial declarations concerning his innocence, Vaman claimed that “we did not have any member in the Legionary nest with the name Plamadeala Leonida”<sup>343</sup> and that he accused Plamadeala of Legionarism in court because he was “forced by his interrogator”<sup>344</sup> to do so. Ion Pavel, on the other hand, admitted that he knew Plamadeala by “name” but not by “face”<sup>345</sup> (*dupa figura*). He also stated that, “at the interrogations [from 1948] I provided (*aratat*) more names due to pressures. In 1946-1947 I knew Plamadeala Leonida only as a simple student.”<sup>346</sup> In these years, Pavel continued, he only knew the following Legionaries: Bordasiu Nicolae, Braga Roman,<sup>347</sup> Nistor Constantin, Brasov Nita and Ragalie Constantin,<sup>348</sup> omitting Plamadeala from this list. In light of Pavel Ioan’s statement, the prosecutor requested that these students be brought as witnesses at Plamadeala’s trial for the sake of “establishing the objective truth.”<sup>349</sup> Furthermore, Plamadeala was not granted bail, as per the lawyer’s request, due to “lack of sufficient proof”<sup>350</sup> pertaining to his innocence or lack thereof. A new court date was set, once again, for 3 August 1955,<sup>351</sup> which was also later suspended as the witnesses from the prosecutor’s side were absent, with only Plamadeala and his lawyer Voinescu present before the Tribunal on that day.<sup>352</sup> The next court proceeding was set for 7 September 1955.<sup>353</sup>

At the September 7 hearing, only Plamadeala, Voinescu and Roman Braga were present, with the other witnesses of the prosecution missing.<sup>354</sup> Braga refused to “take an oath... for the reason that being a monk, his faith did not allow him”<sup>355</sup> to do so. He also confirmed that he

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<sup>342</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 78.

<sup>343</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 76.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>345</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 75.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>347</sup> Braga was freed from the Valea Neagra labour camp on 22 July 1953 and was residing in Bucharest, with the following home address: 77 Matei Voevod str. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 79.

<sup>348</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 75.

<sup>349</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 78.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>352</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 95.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.* Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, pp. 80-84.

<sup>354</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 112.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

never “heard that Plamadeala was a Legionary” and that Vaman Constantin confessed to him at the Pitesti prison that he was “forced” by interrogators to “denounce” him as such.<sup>356</sup> Furthermore, Voinescu informed the Tribunal that Ragalie Constantin was living in the village Saulesti, Craiova, Bordasiu Nicolae disappeared and his whereabouts were unknown to authorities, and Nistor Constatin, Brasov Nita and Vila Petre had died at the Targul Ocna<sup>357</sup> penitentiary.<sup>358</sup> A new court date was set once again, this time for 12 October 1955.<sup>359</sup> Prior to the October 12 hearing, Plamadeala also requested that the Tribunal grant him bail on the grounds of lack of evidence that would disprove his innocence,<sup>360</sup> a request that was denied at a Tribunal session convened on 19 September 1955 solely to discuss his petition.<sup>361</sup> The Tribunal also concluded that “the request for liberation is to be rejected, as there are still witnesses to be interrogated, upon which the accused, being free, may have an influence.”<sup>362</sup>

#### *Final sentence and prison discharge*

The October 12 hearing was decisive in the sense that the prosecution had no more witnesses on whom to base its accusations against Plamadeala. At that hearing, the sole witness present, Ragalie Constantin, claimed that he did not know Antonie: “I don’t know him; this is the first time I see him... I don’t know and I have never heard that Plamadeala was part of the subversive organization of which I was part.”<sup>363</sup> With Nistor Constantin,<sup>364</sup> Vila Petre<sup>365</sup> and Brasov Nita<sup>366</sup> now confirmed dead, and Bordasiu Nicolae—vanished (*disparut*), Plamadeala’s defense lawyers, Dinu Voinescu and Manolescu Mircea,<sup>367</sup> requested his bail<sup>368</sup> (*eliberare*

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<sup>356</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 115.

<sup>357</sup> During 1950s, inmates in this prison worked in salt mines. Richard K. Carlton. *Forced Labor in “People’s Democracies.”* (New York: Free Europe Committee, 1955), p. 177.

<sup>358</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 112.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>360</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 115.

<sup>361</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 118.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.* Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, pp. 82-85.

<sup>363</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 144.

<sup>364</sup> Nistor Constantin’s death certificate states that he died from tuberculosis in 1950, at the Targul Ocna prison. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 137.

<sup>365</sup> Vila Petre’s death certificate states that he died at the Emergency Hospital in Bucharest on 1 June 1948. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 135.

<sup>366</sup> In a letter addressed to Mihai Plamadeala dating from 4 September 1955, Brasov Nita’s mother informs him of her son’s death. According to the letter, Brasov Nita died on 8 May 1950 at the Targul Ocna prison. ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 121.

<sup>367</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 169.

<sup>368</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, pp. 144-145.

provizorie), which was later denied.<sup>369</sup> Despite the rather weak case presented by the prosecutors, Plamadeala was nevertheless convicted and given four years in prison for “conspiracy against the social order”<sup>370</sup> at yet another trial which took place on 11-14 January 1956, as a result of Plamadeala’s appeal for a retrial dating from 15 October 1955.<sup>371</sup> On 14 January 1956, Plamadeala was granted full pardon in light of the newly issued Decree 421 from 1955.<sup>372</sup> According to article 4 of this decree, “those who were convicted at up to five years for crimes against the state,” as provided in several articles including article 209, based upon which Plamadeala was convicted, were pardoned.<sup>373</sup> Plamadeala was asked only to pay 200 lei to cover court fees.<sup>374</sup> He was freed three months later, on 2 April 1956.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>370</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 181.

<sup>371</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, pp. 147-148, 178-181.

<sup>372</sup> Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, pp. 84-87.

<sup>373</sup> “Decret 421/1955”, available on <http://www.lege-online.ro/lr-DECRET-421%20-1955-%2821461%29-%281%29.html>, accessed on 5 May 2015.

<sup>374</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 184.

<sup>375</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 183.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Life in Prison or “Three Hours in Hell”**

*How to describe Plamadeala’s years in prison?*

The last chapter of this work will aim to describe Plamadeala’s experiences during his two years of incarceration, using the allegoric descriptions he provides in his work, *Three Hours in Hell*. The title of this chapter suggests two different terms which may be employed to define these two years, the latter, “three hours in hell,” which is also the title of his autobiographical work, were Plamadeala’s own words in defining his experiences in prison and after his release. Both terms, however, raise further questions. Namely, the concept of life, as used here, begs one to ponder upon what human life is and whether a demeaning human existence, orchestrated by individuals other than the one experiencing it, may be identified as human life or something else. Human life, for it to be intact, entails at least choice, freedom, dignity, and right to self-determination. When any of these premises collapses, life reduces itself to being, and even this state of existence can further reduce itself to a lower status, in dependence of one’s surroundings.

“Three Hours in Hell” may be in this case the more applicable concept to describe his experiences during those years. Yet, given its subjective and metaphorical connotation, describing Plamadeala’s days in prison as such invites more confusion rather than clarity in the mind of the reader. Still, by the mere usage of the term “hell,” one may grasp to some extent what was being in prison like for Plamadeala. Because the experiencer’s voice in describing one’s life should supersede that of the outsider, this chapter will conclude with the analysis of Plamadeala’s *Three Hours in Hell*. The discussion about this book will offer some insights into the information provided in the first part of this chapter, as told by Securitate documents and Plamadeala’s memoirs. This discussion will hopefully shed light into the way in which Plamadeala lived in the early 1950s.

*Physical torture*

When asked whether during prison interrogations Securitate officers tortured Plamadeala physically, the theologian answered in the following manner: “About these things I prefer not to talk ... It could not have been otherwise, but it is embarrassing.”<sup>376</sup> Plamadeala’s reluctance to describe the physical torture to which he was subject, coupled with the very little information in

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<sup>376</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 172.

his Securitate files about this aspect of his interrogations, make it difficult to know the extent of the physical abuse he experienced during this time. Plamadeala did confess to the same journalist, however, that during interrogations prisoners were tied to a wooden log, by hands and legs, being spun around it while having their feet beaten at the same time.<sup>377</sup> Furthermore, interrogations were carried out sporadically, and at any time of the day or of the night, to further stir feelings of uncertainty and freight to prisoners:

How was the call to interrogation?...Before getting out of the cell they would put glasses on you, afterwards they would grab you by the arm and they would take you by the elevator. They would take you upstairs, they would get out of the elevator, and they would take you to the interrogation room. This could have taken place at midnight; it could have been at night; everything was unpredictable in this respect.<sup>378</sup>

#### *Other methods used to obtain information from Plamadeala*

Besides physical torture, interrogators used other tactics aimed at targeting the psychological makeup and morale of Plamadeala with the scope of obtaining information from him. One of the methods entailed extending interrogations up to three or four days and nights,<sup>379</sup> or 72 or 96 hours, respectively, while being asked the same questions in a repetitive manner.<sup>380</sup>

There were moments, for example, when they were getting me out of the cell and they were bringing me [back] on the third day, and three days and three nights I was sitting down on a chair...The interrogators were changing every four hours! And they were addressing me and were overwhelming me with one and the same question. From time to time, I of course was falling asleep and then they were making such a sound to the point that for me, because I was in the situation I was, it [the noise] sounded like atomic bomb.<sup>381</sup>

Interrogations were sometimes carried out in different rooms on the same day, as it was the case of those that took place on 13 April 1955. On that day, Plamadeala was kept in room 22 of Jilava from 10:05am to 11:45am and in room 77 from 7:30pm to 10:30pm.<sup>382</sup>

Intimidation was another strategy used, coupled with questions aiming to bring to the interrogator's awareness one's physical weakness, a disease or health condition one was especially frightened it would deteriorate as a result of torture. In Plamadeala's case, the

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<sup>377</sup> *Ibid*, p. 174.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid*, p. 173.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid*, p. 173.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>382</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 8, p. 43.

interrogator assigned to cause him physical harm was known among inmates by his nickname Tarzan, most likely for his probable very tall and stout stature:

“Tell me,” Tarzan told Plamadeala, “how are your lungs?” “Very good.” “Your heart hurts from time to time? You have something with your heart?” “I have nothing, Sir.” “How are your eyes?” “I have no problems. I see very well.” “You have headaches?” “No, Sir, you can start beating me up. I have no sickness. Nothing hurts me. I surprised him with “you can start beating me up.” I think he swore at me; got out immediately from the room.<sup>383</sup>

Another tactic employed to obtain information from Plamadeala involved placing him in a cell with a camouflaged Securitate agent assigned to befriend him in order to obtain information from him. This incident took place shortly after the incident with “Tarzan” failed. Plamadeala was brought to another cell unexpectedly, and, as the theologian explained, so that “there would be no continuity, so that you would not maintain your resistance and to always have the impression that you are abandoned, that you are thrown out somewhere to the point that you had no idea what is going on with you.”<sup>384</sup>

All of a sudden, there was another inmate. There were small cells, with two beds one over the other, but how do I say it, there were bunk beds one over the other the width of the wall of the cell. One was sleeping on the bottom and one on the top; if there was agglomeration, two were sleeping in the lower level and two on the upper one. There, there was only one person, so one of the beds was mine. Well, we introduced each other, he said it seems; “I am an engineer so and so, maybe from Caransebes or Timisoara,<sup>385</sup> I am also being interrogated (sunt pe ancheta). Which of the beds you want, the upper or the lower one? God, he was so nice to the point that it got me thinking. And that which got me thinking first thing was the fact that he was letting me choose, if he let me choose between the lower and upper [bed], that means that he was not fixated on one of the beds and he arrived there a little before me. I chose the lower bed; it was more comfortable, and I began talking to him. First, where you are from, how is at the monastery. I did nothing and I wake up arrested. “Listen, it’s between us. What do you mean you did nothing?” In that moment I realized, God, this one is not who he seems to be. And from that moment I crafted a program of discussions that turned out to be very good. From that day they did not take me to interrogations, which was completely abnormal. I thought I was going to be beaten by Tarzan, but all of a sudden I went to a cell with him [in it]. They were taking him every day to interrogate him; I realized that they were calling him because he was interrogating me in the cell and then he was going upstairs and was telling everything he discussed with me. Well, for about ten days he was taken out every day and I was not taken at all from the cell. After ten days, the door opened, the soldier entered and told me: “Pack your stuff.”<sup>386</sup>

At one point, Plamadeala’s resilience was tested even to the point of being locked for three days and three nights *in continuum* in a closet (fiset) the size of a telephone booth:

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<sup>383</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 173-174.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid*, p. 175.

<sup>385</sup> Cities in Transylvania.

<sup>386</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], pp. 175-176.

I was in a hall, and by a wall there were four closets made of metal, metal closets. He [the officer] opened the door. Jabbed me in one of them. Locked the door. Pulled the latch and forgot me there... I tried to bend myself [inside it]. I tried to sit down, with my feet lifted up and with my back in an upright position, in other words, to sit in a bent position. It was impossible. It was nighttime at one point and I was sleepy. The cell opened and the soldier threw me a mattress. The floor was of cement. He threw me a small mattress so that I could sit on that small mattress in order to be able to sleep as I could. The following day that door opened again and he threw me a piece of bread for the whole day. He was asking me if I want to go to the toilet and was getting me out immediately. And [he] kept me there another day. And then another night came and [he] kept me another day. And then another night came and only then, on the third day, after three days and three nights, they got me out of there... It was terrible, terrible to not lie down, three days and three nights.<sup>387</sup>

Sleep deprivation was, however, one of the most prevalent tactics employed to destroy prisoners' spirit and physical strength. That is because its application on inmates required very few resources from the interrogators. For that, the supervision of a soldier assigned per cell sufficed to enforce it. In cells, inmates were expected, as Mihai Plamadeala confirms, to "walk continuously (*sa faca pasi*), in other words to move in the cell, to walk, and not to sit on the edge of the bed,"<sup>388</sup> and in this way to cause them great fatigue as a result of sleep deprivation. In those cases, prisoners' sleep time had to be approved, as it was the case of Plamadeala. On 29 November 1954, for example, Lieutenant Banesu M. wrote a note granting him to sleep until 6 pm.<sup>389</sup> The same Lieutenant wrote on 20 December 1954 a similar handwritten note in which he granted Plamadeala to sleep three hours in room 41/1.<sup>390</sup>

### *Moments of civility and humanity in prison*

In the two years in prison, Plamadeala also lived moments manifested by civility and human virtue. In his recollections of those years, Plamadeala speaks in an extensive manner about two incidents. The first one is about his encounter with Romania's prince Nicolae Mavrocordat who taught Plamadeala English while sharing with him a cell at Jilava:

How did I study [English]? On the back of my plate—everyone had a plate which one had the right to keep... I received porridge in it. On the back of the plate I was putting a layer of paste of soap and then a layer of DDT.<sup>391</sup> They were giving us DDT to protect ourselves from lice. I was putting the plate upside down until it dried up, and when it dried up the plate was becoming white like a piece of paper and with a stick I was writing on it whatever I wanted. I learned English on a plate! The professor, Mavrocordat, was telling me words and I was writing them and then he was telling what they meant in Romanian. He was

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<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>388</sup> *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, p. 33.

<sup>389</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 8, p. 58.

<sup>390</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 8, p. 59.

<sup>391</sup> Dangerous for human health insecticide, also known by its full name: dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane.



dictating me sentences. What can I say, he taught me English in a systematic manner with which I could begin my studies in English [at Oxford].<sup>392</sup>

The second one is about his encounter with a doctor who inspected his cell. This doctor assigned him to go Vacaresti hospital<sup>393</sup> for the sake of providing Plamadeala better food and access to fresh air, this without his being sick of a serious disease—the only reason inmates were sent to that hospital. On that day, Plamadeala was sitting on an upper bunk bed examining the two officers and the doctor from above. The following conversation took place between Plamadeala and the doctor:

“Are you a priest?” “Yes, Sir.” “Get down, please.” I get down, as I was on the upper bunk bed...He tells the officers: “Wait a little.” Those stopped and turned towards him. I jump, he comes to me, looks me in the eyes, looks at my nose and tells me: “Father, you suffered from a serious illness.” “Sir, I don’t remember that I suffered from a serious illness.” “No, you don’t remember! You, Father, suffered from a serious disease. It didn’t hurt you here a lot?” And he winked at me. “Yes, for sure, I had for many years a strong sinusitis.” “You must know that you still have it now. Sir, please note that tomorrow we are taking him to Vacaresti hospital.”...He winked at me and moved to another person.<sup>394</sup>

The day after, at Vacaresti, this doctor explained him the reason why he brought Plamadeala there:

“Listen, Father, you are severely sick of sinusitis...Whoever asks you, you say this! I will call you here every day. I will tell...that I give you medication, you are very sick! I want to keep you for two or three weeks, to get you better, after which I am sorry, you will return to Jilava. But I want to keep you here for three weeks on a better diet.” Food there was better.<sup>395</sup>

### *Three Hours in Hell*

The story of Plamadeala’s years in prison remains, nevertheless, a mystery despite one’s awareness of the few incidents that took place while he was incarcerated, as told by Securitate files and by him, through his memoirs. First, because Securitate files do not depict a holistic image of the person they mention, but only a series of details about him or her, the validity of which may be easily questioned. Second, because one’s recollections are often the outcome of a filtered perspective on one’s life. That which is said may only be a small, insignificant part of that which remains untold. Employing solely sources from police files or from one’s memoirs to

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<sup>392</sup> *Mitropolitul Antonie Plamadeala. Detalii Biografice*, pp. 95-95.

<sup>393</sup> Hospital which treated inmates.

<sup>394</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 179.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid*, p. 180.

talk about one's experiences in trying situations is like painting a multi-dimensional, colorful spherical object, exhibiting a sense of awe to the one examining it, as a mere rudimentary shape of an incomplete circle, traced with a pencil on a crumpled piece of paper. In the case of Plamadeala, faced with this dilemma, one is left with his autobiographical book about his experience in prison and after his release to perfect this "rudimentary circle" and paint a more complete story of what Plamadeala lived through in those years.

*The book's main purpose: criticism of totalitarianism and its effects on humanity*

*Three Hours in Hell* is an allegorical story that addresses the effects of a dictatorial political system on humanity, namely its depersonalization, the making of a new *homo-sapiens* molded on the exterior and on the interior by the system to fit and attend to its socio-economic and political interests, and yet, within one's being, still repeatedly somewhat reflective of one's not fully ruined true self, apparent through one's memories of that prior identity. The book most likely refers to the negative psychological effects the newly established Communist system in Romania had on its people during the time in which the author was writing the manuscript of this book.

The book was first published in 1970 in Bucharest,<sup>396</sup> roughly five years after the coming in power of Nicolae Ceausescu as the Communist party's secretary general. Unlike his predecessor Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, who died in March of 1965 of cancer, Ceausescu promised to distance Romania's domestic and foreign policy from Moscow's influence. This he did by first denouncing the brutal policies and human rights violations committed during Gheorghe-Gheorgiu Dej's governance (1948-1965). Ceausescu's stand against Moscow was especially embodied in his refusal to participate in the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, to quell the "Prague Spring"—the burgeoning of liberalization reforms in Czechoslovakia that were met by Soviet tanks aiming to repress them.<sup>397</sup> Domestically, Ceausescu made similar in scope moves to convey his intentions for an apparent more humane approach to governance, one of which was allowing the publication of literature that denounced his predecessor's regime

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<sup>396</sup> Paul Bruslanowski. "Coordonate Biografice ale Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala" (Biographical Coordinates of Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala) in *Teologie, Slujire, Ecumenism* (Theology, Service, Ecumenism) (Sibiu: Tiparului Tipografiei Eparhiale, 1996), p. 30.

<sup>397</sup> "Romania" in *Dictionary of East European History Since 1945*, Joseph Held, ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 379.

and human rights violations. *Three Hours in Hell* may have been, therefore, published with this goal in mind.

#### *Reclaiming one's true identity*

The author wrote his *Three Hours in Hell* in the 1960s, after his release from prison. He wrote it, as his brother Mihai Plamadeala claims in the preface of this book, in utter misery of the soul and the body, while recalling his years in the penitentiary. When he wrote this book, Plamadeala was probably attempting to rescue his tainted identity and the identity of his own countrymen, oppressed by a newly established Communist regime in Romania. But then, by doing so, he perhaps still felt powerless, as he claims close to the end of his manuscript that philosophical arguments seem impotent in the face of overt terror: “what can, let’s say, the unarmed Kant do while facing a hungry lion?”<sup>398</sup> Still, the “unarmed Kant” in Plamadeala felt somewhat hopeful to eventually reach an audience that would read his book. This one learns from a Securitate report written on him in 1965, where agent “Grigorescu Marin,” a false name of a then pretended friend of Plamadeala who was secretly spying on him, wrote that Plamadeala hoped the manuscript “would be a novel of the era.”<sup>399</sup> If Grigorescu’s statement was true, then the young theologian most likely aspired to make known to the world about the “hell” in which he and his people lived. Given that hell can be mostly felt rather than seen, Plamadeala wrote in his book mainly about people’s inner feelings rather than actions.

#### *Pathological fear induced by a totalitarian regime*

The key message of this book is hidden in the psychological analysis of its characters and of their emotional condition. Every page speaks directly or indirectly about fear, about one’s incapacity to express outwardly to the world that which lies within one’s inner existence. This for Plamadeala was a national tragedy camouflaged as an overt expression of denial of its existence. And to express this psychological state within himself and the hearts of his Romanian people, the author relied more on the wisdom brought forth by theology, philosophy and psychology rather than on an intricate plot. Furthermore, because he was writing it in a time when any direct criticism of the Communist regime would have placed him in immediate peril, he chose Fascist Germany during World War II to be the place where his characters met.

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<sup>398</sup> Antonie Plamadeala, *Trei Ceasuri in Iad* [Three Hours in Hell] (Bucharest, Editura Sophia, 2013), p. 9.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

However, any nuanced reader of his time would have understood the author's subtle insinuations. His characters, although they have German names and live in the Germanic town R., represent the Ions and Ileanas<sup>400</sup> of his motherland, fellow Romanians like him, caught into the web of despotism, of forced denial *en masse* of one's true nature for the sake of accepting the identity projected upon them by the newly established Communist regime in Romania. The epitome of this phenomenon is embodied by the book's main character, Adam-Ghast.

### *Adam-Ghast*

Adam-Ghast is no one but an allegorical description of Plamadeala in the 1950s and 1960s— a merging of two human identities. Adam-Ghast's story is the following: sometime during World War II, a young man, seemingly lost, confused and shabbily dressed, is dropped off at a train station in the city R., where everything seems familiar to him, where the people he meets have identities about whom he can retrieve memories in his consciousness, although nothing in his exterior appearance is recognizable to them and nothing about his physical, documented identity is recognizable to him. In his documents, he is known to others and himself as Peter Ghast, a high school history teacher in the town R. In his mind, however, he recalls an identity of a man named Anton Adam. He has the thoughts, feelings and memories of Anton, the son of Ms. Adam, the friend of Valter Seebeck and the fiancée of a young doctor by the name of Clara Vogel. This confusion pertaining to his identity, he is told, arrives from a medical intervention, a brain transplant performed by a doctor by the name of Murnau, who informs Adam-Ghast that he is in fact Peter Ghast, that he was injured in the head during the war and saved by a three-year long operation that placed the brain acid of another moribund by the name of Anton Adam in Peter Ghast's brain for the sake of saving Peter Ghast's life.

### *The legend about three hours in hell*

About those three years spent undergoing this operation, Adam-Ghast remembers only the "sound of a clock,"<sup>401</sup> or the "nightmare"<sup>402</sup> that reminds him of the following "legend that he found during a trip to Greece:"<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Ion is the most common name given to Romanian boy and Ileana—to a Romanian girl, respectively.

<sup>401</sup> Plamadeala, *Trei Ceasuri in Iad*, p. 34.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*

In Capsala, in the Mount Athos, there is a paraplegic monk who for twenty years did not leave his bed. He could not endure the suffering and he was begging for his death, but death was not coming. One day, an angel appeared and told him:

-- God heard your prayer and sent me to offer you an arrangement. For your mistakes you would have to be sick one more year, after which you would be forgiven and would die. But if you agree to spend now three hours in hell, after three hours, death will take away your suffering for both the current life and the one after your passing.

--I agree, said the emaciated man, after he thought that no matter how difficult would be his sufferings in hell, three hours would pass faster than a year would. And he was sent to hell. And the sufferings began, and three hours passed, and three days, and three years and three hundred years, and the angel never came. One day, the darkness of tar was cut by a ray of light: the angel returned.

--Why are you so angry? he asked him.

--I did not think that God's angels lie, responded the emaciated man, overwhelmed by sadness.

--What do you mean? asked again the angel, with pretended amazement.

--You told me that you would deliver me after three hours, and look, three hundred years have passed since I suffer here.

--Three hundred years?! the angel asked in amazement. You are mistaken. Only one hour has passed; you still have two more to go.

And then the emaciated man grabbed the angel's clothes, begging him in tears:

--Get me out of here and take me wherever, give me another suffering on earth, among humans, not only for one year, but for thousands of years, even until the end of the world, but only deliver me from here!

And in that moment he was awoken by a joyous ray of sun, which reached his cell of suffering from Capsala. He looked at the clock. An hour had passed since he fell asleep.<sup>404</sup>

As Plamadéala writes, in Peter-Ghast's three-year long sleep at Murnau's hospital, Peter-Ghast, alluding to the book's author's inner state, was "the emaciated man from Capsala, in hell. All his joints were hurting, a deaf pain, that he could have only expressed in thought, in an unusual numbness ... and the angel was not coming. An eagle was eating him and was not finishing him."<sup>405</sup>

The "hell" lived under the guidance of Murnau, however, does not end with the surgery. Sent out to the town R., with documents attesting to the fact that he is Peter Ghast, Adam-Ghast undergoes a series of unusual and heartbreaking encounters in which he attempts to prove to his loved ones, his mother, fiancée and friend, that he is indeed Anton Adam, based on his memories and feelings he has towards them. Eventually, however, not being recognized by them, he is also rejected by society, deemed demented and sent out into the unknown. Only a so-called crazy young man by the name Carl, the only one who is brave enough to hold on to his true nature, thoughts and identity and to speak the truth, and yet whom everyone else considers mentally infirmed, is willing to recognize Adam-Ghast as Anton Adam and to believe his story. After Adam-Ghast's disappearance, Carl sets out to find out the truth about Peter Ghast, only to

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<sup>404</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid*.

discover that he is indeed Anton Adam, and that he did not undergo a brain transplant, but only plastic surgery that modified his exterior appearance so profoundly that the patient would be unrecognizable to both himself and those who once knew him.

*Understanding Plamadeala's prison years through his autobiographical work*

Plamadeala once described his trials in prison as “destructive.”<sup>406</sup> Neither the theologian nor the Securitate files explain in a direct manner what prison really destroyed in the thirty-year old Plamadeala. His autobiographical work may help one find an answer—Plamadeala’s true identity. In light of the analysis provided above, the prison years were most likely the ‘operation’ during which Anton Adam was transformed, or made to believe that he was modified into, the apparent Peter Ghast. In the process, the newly formed persona was a fusion of the identities of the two. The new man, Adam-Ghast, was a miserable human, struggling to come to terms with his new identity, and to return his initial nature-Anton Adam. “This man of mine,” Plamadeala once told a journalist, “in the last chapter of the novel...does not die; he leaves somewhere to find his identity, and I left my main character on the road in search of [his identity].”<sup>407</sup>

Identity is synonymous to essence and essence is synonymous to soul. The loss of either of them implies the loss of all. And for a human being, there is no greater tragedy than the loss of oneself and the agonizing quest to reclaim one’s initial identity, while immersed in confusion and despair, living in a society in which one’s survival often implied letting go of one’s true nature. From Plamadeala’s *Three Hours in Hell* one may conclude that his prison years were possibly a turning point in his life, for the way in which they shaped his essence. The how, or the extent to which these experiences did affect his identity, remains a mystery to everyone except, probably, to Plamadeala. One thing is certain: the thirty-year old Plamadeala who left Jilava in 1956 was, to an extent, to use theologian’s own words, a morally “destroyed”<sup>408</sup> human being, faced with a heavy burden of coming to terms with his life and himself.

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<sup>406</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 204.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid*, p. 255.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid*, p. 204.

## Conclusion

Romanian writer Nicolae Steinhardt, in his reflections about Securitate's accusations of civilians, once claimed that "you [were]...not accused for what you have done, but for who you [were]", or, as Katherine Verdery puts it, one was accused for "being a particular kind of person: an enemy."<sup>409</sup> The type of "enemy" one could have been perceived by Securitate often "evolved over time."<sup>410</sup> In Plamadeala's case, he was accused in 1949 of Legionarism, for which he was given a sentence of seven years in prison and five years of "civic degradation."<sup>411</sup> In 1956, however, as discussed in chapter 5, the original charge was changed and he was reconvicted for "conspiracy against the social order,"<sup>412</sup> when accusations of Legionarism proved to be unfounded. Echoing Steinhardt's and Verdery's conclusions mentioned above, I argue that Plamadeala was arrested not because he was necessarily a Legionary, but because he was perceived as an "enemy" of the Communist regime, albeit a rather insignificant one, as he was a mere theology student, but an adversary nonetheless. His involvement with the publishing of the clandestine newspaper *The Echo of Bessarabia*, with the anti-Communist resistance movement, his mingling with Legionaries and later association with the monk and nuns from Vladimiresti—all contributed to constructing this apparent image of an "enemy of the state" in the eyes of the Securitate.

As far as his experience in prison concerns, this thesis described it as "destructive,"<sup>413</sup> a conclusion derived from both Plamadeala's memoirs and from his autobiographical work *Three Hours in Hell*. Prison years, however, were not the sole tribulation in the theologian's youth. His refuge to Romania from Bessarabia in 1944 and the six years on the run from Securitate, as discussed in this work, most likely did also play a role in shaping Plamadeala's character.

In the the late 1990s, asked once to look back and reflect upon his life, Plamadeala made

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<sup>409</sup> Katherine Verdery. *Secrets and Truth* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), p. 54.

<sup>410</sup> In Verdery's case, for example, as she describes in her book *Secrets and Truth* about her experience with the Securitate as a researcher in Communist Romania, she was first suspected of "military spying to being seen as a Hungarian in disguise, fomenting unrest among Hungarians in Cluj, to being a spy for the dissident movement." Yet, in each of the "scenarios" written by Securitate about her, she continued to be seen as a "CIA agent"*Ibid*.

<sup>411</sup> The police report in respect to his crime stated the he was a "student [in] the third year at the Faculty of Medicine in 1947-1948, took part in the organization, initiated in the group [which met at] the Matei Voevod dorms, led by Vila Petre, together with Ghitescu Ioan and Carstoiu Iulian. Both Vaman Constantin and Pavel Ion in declarations dating from August 20, 1948 confirm his participation in the organization." ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 2, p. 12, 87.

<sup>412</sup> ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 4, p. 181.

<sup>413</sup> *Amintirile Mitropolitului Antonie Plamadeala*. [Memoirs of the Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala], p. 204.

a rather interesting comment in reference to himself: “Antonie Plamadeala [the theologian],” he explained to a journalist, “if [he] exists now, is the result of a biography which if it was not as it was, Antonie Plamadeala [the theologian] would have not existed.”<sup>414</sup> It seems that by then, as a man in his 70s, Plamadeala found in each trying moment of his life a purpose, a constructive role in his becoming “Antonie Plamadeala, the theologian.” The extent to which the experiences discussed in this work shaped Antonie Plamadeala and contributed to his becoming a writer, theologian and Metropolitan of the Romanian Church is difficult to pinpoint. One thing is certain, as it is also confirmed by Plamadeala, these experiences somehow helped transform the young Leonida, the boy from Stolniceni, Bessarabia refuged to Romania in 1944, into one of the most known Romanian theologians of his time.

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<sup>414</sup> *Ibid*, p. 259.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1<sup>415</sup>



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<sup>415</sup> "Ieromonahul Antonie Plamadeala in Arestul Securitatii" (Hieromonk Antonie Plamadeala Arrested by Securitate), available at <http://fototecaortodoxiei.ro/1377-ieromonahul-antonie-plamadeala-arestul-securitatii>, accessed on May 20, 2015.

Appendix 2<sup>416</sup>



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<sup>416</sup> “Antonie Plamadeala” in *Crestin Ortodox*, available at <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/parinti/antonie-plamadeala-99407.html>, accessed on May 20, 2015.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Manifesto “Christian Brothers” (Fрати Crestini)**

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS,

The worrisome manner in which events have been unfolding, especially in the last few years, taught each one of us to know the various misleading faces that EVIL takes upon, when it wants to hit everything that is dearest: THE NATION (neamul). We watched the devilish collusion with the enemy from outside of those whom we are no longer recognizing as our brothers. They have another goal to attain and for their new achievement they are arranging their forces they are gathering with the whip, with care, in a timely fashion. The CHURCH is the target to which their blind mind does not yield anything and for its destruction their arms are being heard even now. As a test for us and seemingly to fasten their devilish action, God wanted that in this year the day be granted to be spent in fasting and prayer, the day of Saturday of the Holy Passion Week, to fall on the same day which non-Christians have chosen for shallow joys: 1 May. Non-Christians did not shiver to find out of the significance of this mismatch. They are preparing right now for the victory they are seeking, for the red hatred they will be carrying on the streets, and for mocking our Christian faith.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS, do you want your ancestors and sons to curse you as the ones who did not preserve the Christian faith and gave it up to the enemies of Christ?

Do you want your strength to be uncounted for?...Now, more than ever, when the enemy has not yet closed the Church, when praying is still not a crime in the eyes of the temporary tyrants who are over us, let us respond stronger than ever: “Passion day, like the whole Holy Week, no power will remove it from our hearts.” More bluntly and confidently than ever we will respond: “Back of, Satan! Bow your head! Christians have JESUS in [their] hearts and there is no place there for your flags, redden by the hatred toward HIM. Fear you all those who are enemies of the Christian faith. The harsh day of the unpardonable judgment is approaching.”

CHRISTIANS!

Let the enemies of the faith be alone, marking them with all your disrespect, let them be alone to scream in the air, like a weak idol, the slogans leading to death. If we are united, their anger will be powerless, and nothing will be able to shaken our success. In JESUS they will not be able to hit [us]in a sneaky manner.

Be united, ROMANIANS! ...<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Due to the rather poor quality of the Securitate file, some of the text has been omitted, as it is impossible to be deciphered. See ACNSAS, PF, dossier 905, vol. 6, p. 160. Also cited in Mihai Plamadeala and Adrian Petcu. *Mitropolitul Antonie. Detalii Bibliografice*, pp. 47-48.

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