

## PRELIMINARY TO DECEMBER 1989

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### ABSTRACT:

ROMANIA WAS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN EASTERN EUROPE WHO MOVED TOWARDS DEMOCRACY THROUGH REVOLUTION AND VIOLENT, WHERE COMMUNIST LEADERS WERE EXECUTED. BEFORE ROMANIAN REVOLUTION, ALL OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN PASSED PEACEFULLY TO DEMOCRACY.

PROTESTS, STREET BATTLES AND DEMONSTRATIONS IN DECEMBER 1989 LEAD ULTIMATELY TO ENDING THE COMMUNIST REGIME.

POLICE STATE, SECURITY, ECONOMIC POLICY OF CEAUSESCU'S MEGALOMANIA CONSTRUCTION AND AUSTERITY AND FINALLY EXTERNAL FACTORS ARE SOME OF THE REASONS THAT MAKE PEOPLE NOT HAPPY WITH THE COMMUNIST REGIME.

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**KEY WORDS:** REVOLUTION, COUP, 1989, TIMISOARA, BUCHAREST, HANDLING

Regarding revolutions, Eric Selbin first considers that these are firstly human creations - with all the inherent negative meaning of such a statement - and less inevitable natural processes. Therefore, the focus should be on people, not structures, the options, not determinism and the transformation of society, not on the simply transition<sup>2</sup>. *The flaws of the Ceausescu regime* were presented in detail, focusing on the elements that generated the exclusion of Romania from the circuit of values<sup>3</sup>.

Starting from the statements of Selbin, the image on which we must focus represents both the involvement of people, either Romanian or foreign, in the 1989 events and their actions. The Romanian Revolution - I prefer not to use this name - represents for Romania, a necessary damage, and those who have contributed to its achievement risked enormously given the fact that if the crowd had not "pierced" the fear barrier, and the street presence had been insignificant, they certainly would have been destroyed by Ceausescu.

The year 1989 was the most important in the history of Europe, from the Second World War to the present. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe regained their freedom after years of totalitarianism. Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania were finally free to decide on their future. Country's independence from the former Soviet bloc was a catalyst for development and the European relations in the years that

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Selbin, *Revoluția începe în lumea reală – întoarcerea la reprezentativitate* publicat în volumul *Teoretizarea Tranzitiilor* (John Foran coord.), (Iași: Polirom, 2004), 131

<sup>3</sup> Adrian Gorun, *Dezvoltare Socială și Globalizare*, (Targu-Jiu: Academica Brâncuși, 2012), 109

followed, led to the collapse of the Soviet Union<sup>4</sup>.

The sudden and unplanned collapse of Soviet totalitarian communism put nations in a difficult situation: citizens had to bring to power through free and fair elections, leaders able to accomplish democracy and capitalism. Twenty-two years after, there is a conspicuous difference between countries headed by leaders who have the will and political science to lead the country towards the rule of law and economic prosperity, and those that did not have this opportunity.

Highlighting the early 80's, the threat of totalitarianism - as the regime which returns - is becoming more and more a reality when - just as the communist predecessors or Hitler - a millenarian vision of history is associated with the will to radically transform the social order as H. Arendt<sup>5</sup> concluded.

The case of Romania in the world is not singular. In the 60s of the twentieth century when the phenomenon Rust Belt reported the decline of the industrial production, the totalitarian communist regime established and led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej until 1965 and continued by Ceausescu (March 1965 - December 1989) laid the basis of industrialization.

Most of the investment was concentrated in heavy industry manufacturing "with its pivot, the mechanical engineering", making it a huge waste of resources for the development of the mining industry, steel, energy, chemical, building materials, food, etc . Efforts were enormous for industrial and transport infrastructure development, trade support for the development of energetic companies, but also for the agricultural mechanization and the irrigation system realization. The burdensome external loans quickly led to a new starvation of the population, the increasing number of shortages and deprivation. Constraints of all kinds have increased the degree of dissatisfaction and the spirit of revolt. In a favorable international situation, created especially through the contribution of the U.S., the Vatican and the top leadership of the USSR, the regime collapsed on 22 December 1989<sup>6</sup>.

In order to be able to present the real events that led to what happened in 1989 in Romania we must take into consideration that our country was the last one who gave up communism. There was no way to get rid of change, so that at the end of '89, the antitotalitarian movement has made its presence felt on the streets of Romania. The removal of Ceausescu could not be stopped or postponed, but could have been peaceful if he had understood that the opposition would not help to maintain the totalitarian leadership.

Daniel Chirot comes with an explanation showing that "in the industrialized countries, except the periods at the end of the major, catastrophic wars, it never occurred for the fundamental legitimacy of the system to collapse. And even if there were some serious questions raised in Germany after the First World War in France in 1940, and in Germany and Japan in 1945, in these countries there were no victorious revolutions. It would be ridiculous to claim that in the 80's, Eastern Europe's economic problems have reached such severe crisis levels as those caused by the absolute defeat in a world war. The appearance of such revolutionary situations in peace and relative stability in societies with a strong sense of nationality, infrastructure, police forces, armies and governments operating in the absence of external invaders or international crises without civil wars, famine or economic crisis represents an unprecedented situation. Even reviewing the economic problems can not provide a sufficient explanation<sup>7</sup>." Through his statement, Daniel Chirot informs us through a clear and concise message that the collapse of the Communist regime could not have suffered

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<sup>4</sup> Gorun, *Dezvoltare Socială și Globalizare*

<sup>5</sup> Gorun, *Dezvoltare Socială și Globalizare*, 105

<sup>6</sup> Gorun, *Dezvoltare Socială și Globalizare* , 79

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Chirot în *Revoluțiile din 1989, între trecut și viitor*, (Iași: Polirom, 1999), 35

an implosion, given the fact that the political stability was favorable to some extent. The only exception that rose against the political stability was represented by the people. This one, although his rights were violated, would have not been able to impose in front of the leaders if the aid had not come from outside of the country. "In 80's-90's of the last century, the violation of the rights and liberties of citizens in Romania has become a key topic in debates of the United Nations organizations and other international organizations<sup>8</sup>." The problem was not that people did not want change but the impediment was that they did not know what was going on, did not know what democracy means and whether it will guarantee its existence at least the same as communism did.

Certainly the uncertain future that foreshadowed a new world - freedom offered by the democratic regime - it made not hate communism but could not stand in the way of the hatred they had towards leaders. The communist ideology is imprinted in their mind, and the evil they had to surpass was due only to the leader and his decisions. In the end the people shouted "Down with Ceausescu". Definitely protests would not have stopped if Nicolae Ceausescu and Wojciech Jaruzelski had gone out on the streets and told the crowd: *from tomorrow on, the state moves to democracy, and I will be the new president!* If Ceausescu had understood that change was inevitable and had given up the power and his place was taken by another leader of the Communist Party, in Romania of 1989 would not have been shed the innocent blood of the people, but we had not tasted the freedom offered by democracy<sup>9</sup>.

"Evil was not done by regime, but the leading. Romania was unique among communist countries. Two-man management made the dictatorship to be an extremely tough and personal one. Repression and control system was very well done. N Ceausescu, was assisted and often surpassed by Elena Ceausescu who successively accumulated all the attributes of power, surrounded by family members - who occupied key positions in the party hierarchy and state and having available a powerful device of information, they installed fierce dictatorship in the country, which annihilated in the bud any oppositionist or reforming attempt<sup>10</sup>."

The conspiracy from 1989 was not meant to be kept secret given the fact that the state intelligence organs were advancing through the various reports signaling the *"numerous and severe disapproving attitude to the realities of Romania, including the representative political personalities"*<sup>11</sup>. Calls made to Romania by George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, direct or not, conveying that change must be imminent were unsuccessful because Ceausescu wanted to solve problems without help.

The dictator, as you could see, there was hardly original. He contested and apparently repudiated and banished every bit of *sacred* contained by any power in an immanent manner, and – desacralising propagandistically by deceptive methods, *sacralized* the glorious past, auto declaring himself the continuer of the illustrious ancestors<sup>12</sup>.

George Bush, considered the *main enemy of communism*, said in an interview on Romania, published in an American newspaper that *"I would like to see some action in this country. I do not know when this will happen. I sent a new ambassador in Romania, Alan Green, who is my friend. I sent him in Romania because he is a firm and uncompromising man, who knows well my views about democracy and freedom. I think Alan Green left on*

<sup>8</sup> Dumitru Maziliu, *Regimul politic din România înaintea revoluției din 1989* in *Caietele Revoluției* Nr. 5 (18)/2008, 25

<sup>9</sup> See Adrian Gorun, Gorun, *Dezvoltare Socială și Globalizare*

<sup>10</sup> Constantin Sava, Constantin Monac, *Adevăr despre Decembrie 1989*, (București: Forum, 1999), 10

<sup>11</sup> Sava, *Adevăr despre Decembrie 1989*

<sup>12</sup> Adrian Gorun, Gorun, *Dezvoltare Socială și Globalizare*, 104

29.11.1989 to Romania and he will present our view, mine personally, to president Nicolae Ceausescu. In any case we will try, but it will be very difficult<sup>13</sup>."

In Malta, following the meeting between Bush and Gorbachev, it was decided that change must be speeded in countries that did not wish to pass to real reforms. In a note to the Department of State Security (DSS) it shows that: "*from the available data, it appears that the meeting between Bush and Gorbachev there are signs that URSS will make concessions to the Americans in exchange for economic and financial aid, which would discuss the problem of coordinated exert pressure on those socialist countries that did not pass to the application of real reforms being considered especially RP China, Cuba and Romania*<sup>14</sup>."

A summary analysis of the discussions between the two presidents clearly outlines two aspects: on the one hand, the U.S., seeking to take the decisive role in accelerating the process of development in Eastern Europe - and, on the other hand, and as a follow-up and as a further tone, almost ultimatum by which the U.S. President calls on the Member States of NATO and the USSR pressure to coordinate and initiate a partial economic embargo on Romania. Behold the egregious suffering of the Romanian people had no importance, as it did not have, nor it will ever have, in the sight of the interests of the Great Powers. The essential was that an uncomfortable man - Nicolae Ceausescu and his regime - to be removed. *Even if the Romanian people suffering did not matter*, however, the economic embargo played a role in this scenario, through it, being in fact aimed the increasing discontent of the masses, which, when favorable conditions were created, should act to remove Ceausescu<sup>15</sup>.

America, the main state involved in the fight against communism, through CIA has set up an organization<sup>16</sup> to build and direct the activities both before and during this event. In the following chapters we will see, easily, involve various pawns, either Romanian or foreign, in the events that occurred.

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<sup>13</sup> State Security Department, note 277 of 12.02.1989

<sup>14</sup> State Security Department, note 275 of 01.12.1989

<sup>15</sup> Sava, *Adevăr despre Decembrie 1989*, 12

<sup>16</sup> CIA has established an organization called the Trust Organization which aimed to : " encourage and support the movement of dissent in socialist countries , organizing and directing the activities of information among immigration originating in those countries taking actions directed against the socialist states through hostile elements among emigration or dissent . The newly created organization has its headquarters in California and subsidiaries in West Germany and Austria, the activities being funded by the CIA and special services of NATO countries ... Training shall be made by a panel consisting of former intelligence officers of the socialist countries , which betrayed, among them being the Romanian traitor Pacepa. Among the actions considered successful of the Trust Organization is the help to the political - social destabilize in Poland, Hungary and the GDR. According to the data we have for the future organization intends to focus its activities mainly on Romania and Czechoslovakia " (Note the State Security Department 14/11/1989 )

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