

CONFESSING FAITH BEYOND THE COMMUNIST BARS

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ABSTRACT

The confrontation between good and evil, in the 20th century, had frightening proportions. Through a twisted logic, ideologically and “scientifically” reasoned, there have been destroyed spiritually, morally, socially and economically the destinies of many people, ethnicities and countries. For some people the psychical and physical salvation from the terror of the materialistic-atheist utopia was assuming a spiritual life.

Keywords: political prisoner; confessor; God; Church;

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TERROR AND PUNISHMENT OF “THE NATION’S ENEMIES”

For the Romanian people, almost half of the 20th century represented an inner and outer fight between keeping their identity and faith and joining a materialistic, totalitarian system which wanted to erase any trace of Christian faith on Romanian land. The communist regime tried to break the man from his communion with the transcendent, with the eternity, with the holiness given by the faith in God, in order to obey him to the materialistic, ephemeral ideology. It was intended a re-education of the Romanian people in the spirit of the “new man”¹, meaning an obedient man, without a self-opinion or initiative, a “brain washed” man. “The new man” had to deny his homeland, his family to worship a regime which, in the future, will make him happy. It was intended to replace the Christian faith with a materialistic-atheist ideology. The communist political agenda required egalitarianism, giving up private property in favor of the community. What may seem an ideal way of living, actually represented a way through which communists could accede to power and establish the monopoly for a long period of time. Communism was desired to be, beyond political ideals, a new religion in front of which all had to bow down, to prostrate, being the last, the only one and the supreme ideology. The Romanian people didn’t stay indifferent to this forced imposition of the atheist ideology, but sought to remain worthy and strong in his faith and spiritual identity inherited from his ancestors, even if this meant freedom deprivation, agony, torture, breaking families apart.

“From Nero to Stalin, the antichristian persecution made millions of martyrs all over the world. The „superiority” of communism however, consisted not only in the fact that followed murdering the Christians (cause killing them frees them from torture and makes

¹ About the renewal of man Saint Paul the Apostle speaks, but with a spiritual connotation. “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (*Ephesians* 4:22-24).

martyrs), but to kill the faith itself from their mind and heart, to replace it, through terror, the materialistic abomination of desolation. The plan applies systematically and in the long run, at individual and country level...thrown decades in killing dungeons, shot in the mountains or deported in death camps in Siberia, Romanians suffered for their faith in God and in Christian purpose of this nations.”².

The spiritual search of the human, his hunger and thirst after God’s justice couldn’t be stopped by the communist ideology promoters, who saw its opponents like some heretics, enemies who have to be abolished, exterminated, for their refusal of re-education in the spirit of the “the new man”. An entire state apparatus was created to impose the Stalinist system: the political police – the Security, the main pawn in supervising and fulfilling the socialist-atheist mission, various informers, instigators, and opportunists, who became the spy shadows of other people: at work, in the family, at school, in the same building, in the church, at the syndicate. The party members, brave collaborators of the Romanian Socialist state, benefited from privileges for their involvement in re-educating the people after the Stalinist model. The ones who refused to adhere to principles contrary to the national identity were considered “enemies of the nation”, “bandits”, and along with their descendants became second-hand citizens, without free men rights or intellectual formation rights. These ones came from all society, whether they were simple peasants who refused to give up on their lands and farm animals, or burghers, labelled as “enemies of the people” and obeyed to the imperialist-capitalist ideas. According to the communist political program, the intellectuality had to be abolished for its ideas contrary to the ruling party and for its sympathy for others political parties; being replaced only with the ones obeyed to the regime.

A big challenge for the communist regime was represented by the category of the Church servants, as these preached the joy of faith in the eternal and living God, and the communists badly wanted to abolish any divinity idea from people’s hearts. People’s affection for the ancestral heritage determined them to resist in front of the red giant who spread powerful in Romania. No matter what political regime was, installed in Bucharest, the Romanian Orthodox Church servants, as well as those of other cults or faiths were always fallowed. The attitude of the political people varied³.

For all the opponents of the communist regime death institutions were established through which it was intended to exterminate all that was Romanian, intellectual, and Christian. Through For the Security, founded in 1948 through the 221 Decree⁴, revenge was wanted for the disobedience of the opponents to the communist ideas, its basements becoming harsh torture places. This had as a declared purpose maintaining and strengthening the system by annihilating any dissidence against the line imposed by the communist leadership. The seen image of this institution was prison and work colony. In Romania 160

² Matei Marin, *Fericiți cei prigoniți. Martiri ai temnițelor românești*, Editura Bonifaciu, București, 2008, p. 5.

³ A collection of unique documents, which shows the evolution of the Romanian Orthodox Church and its servants was published, în 2001, in Bucharest, under the banner of the Romanian Academy, at the National Institute for the study of totalitarianism, entitled: *The Romanian Orthodox Church under the communist regime. 1945-1958*, signed by Cristina Păiușan, Radu Ciuceanu. The volume incorporates the full text of the documents (informative reports) made up by the Safety of the State, and from august 1948 by the General Direction of the Security of the Nation.

⁴ As a result of the decision of the Council of Ministers, no. 1.274/27.08.1948, the Presidium of the Grand National Gathering of the Romanian Popular Republic emitted the decree no. 221/28.08.1948 to start-up and organize the General Direction of the Security of the Nation. The decree contains 8 articles, forbidden for publishing. As a Minister of Internal Business signed Teohari Georgescu.

prisons functioned through which 2 million political prisoners⁵ passed through, of which three hundred thousand were killed. Locations of human degradation dungeons were at: Suceava, Pitești⁶, Târgu Ocna, Târgșor, Brașov, Ocnele Mari, Peninsula. Each prison had a special destination: (1) to exterminate the political and intellectual elite (Sighet, Râmnicu Sărat, Galați, Aiud, Craiova, Brașov, Oradea); (2) labor camps (Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră, Peninsula, Poarta Albă, Salcia, Periprava, Constanța, Midia, Capul Midia, Cernavodă); (3) work colonies (Balta Brăilei); (4) for triage and transit (Jilava, Văcărești); (5) for investigation (Rahova, Malmaison, Uranus); (6) pentru women (Mărgineni, Mislea, Miercurea Ciuc, Dumbrăveni, Târgșor); (7) for juveniles (Târgșor, Mărgineni, Cluj); (8) for hospitalisation (Târgu Ocna, Văcărești).

The confessions of the political prisoners describe acts of brutal torture which go from psychological pressures to cruel beatings, agonizing, nearly to death, the human rights being severely violated⁷. The Security, through torture wanted to obtain from the blamed one the confirmation of his guilt. The simulacrum of the investigation, was actually an already written script where the interrogators were playing their pre-arranged roles. Physical torture and especially the psychical one, had as a purpose inducing terror so the defendant gave up easily, to betray himself, to accept all the false accusations and, of course to accuse all the people suspected by the regime as “enemies of the nation”. In the archives of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party there is a document, dated to 01.11.1967, which mentions “improper methods” used by the Security’s investigators, before the year 1964. The methods have been classified in four categories, therefore: (1) the beating, extended malnutrition and torture, in order to obtain accusing statements; (2) the moral pressure to compel the codefendants to declare what has been dictated to them; (3) the falsification of some testimonies given by the codefendants and using forgery letters in order to obtain the admission of some actions; (4) elaborating some testimonies in the absence of the codefendants or writing down some false answers, which the codefendants were forced to sign⁸. The torture started during the investigation was also continued in the prison, the ones found guilty for conspiracy against the social orders being sentenced to heavy years in prison in a severe system. The kicks in sensitive body parts, crushing the nails, pulling out the hair, feet beating with a whip, wooden objects or rubber, beating using a shovel, crucifying were among the most used dehumanization methods of the political prisoners. In the compounds and working colonies starvation and forced work were practiced, and the non-fulfilment of the work norm, which overcame the human strength, in the conditions that the prisoners received as food a kind of porridge lacking in proteins, attracted severe

⁵ A possible vedemecum of some of those who suffered in the Romanian communist camps is the paperwork of Răzvan Codrescu, *Cartea mărturisitorilor. Pentru o istorie a învrednicirii românești*, Editura Rost, București/Pitești, 2014.

⁶ For what it meant the terror of reeducation from Pitești, on the website www.fenomenulpitesti.ro, a representative bibliographical list can be consulted, divided in three chapters, as it follows: I. General work, II. Special works, III. Articles and studies.

⁷ A document-book that contains the confessions of some ex political prisoners is the volume: *Rugul aprins. Duhovnicii ortodoxiei, sub lespezi, în gherlele comuniste*, Editura Ramida, București, signed by Mihai Rădulescu. Describing many real events from the lives of some prisoners captivated and generates amazement. Many questions come to life, with no answer. How was it possible to occur so many horrible things? Why most of the people were passive? Why people are so ignorant towards this face of history still contemporary to many of us?

⁸ *Comisia prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste din România – Raport final*, București, 2006, http://old.presidency.ro/static/ordine/RAPORT_FINAL_CPADCR.pdf (23.10.2017).

punishments: beating naked people, hanging them upside down or incarceration. The political prisoners were often sent to isolation, a dark, narrow, cold room where it was forbidden to sit down, a place of death. The beatings and the humiliations were continued by the cold from the dungeon, the lack of hygiene, the poor diet and medical assistance. The innovations in humiliating and dehumanization the political prisoners in order to form “the new man” led to the horror called “the Pitești phenomenon”. About the re-education from Pitești, the French historian François Furet claims that: “What happened in the Pitești prison between 1949-1952 deserves a special place in the terrifying repertoire of the 20th century’s prison camp’s horrors. The Pitești phenomenon belongs to the same register, but where it comes with a specific feature: the systematic use of torturing the prisoners by other prisoners. The idea belongs to the soviet pedagogue Makarenko (1888-1939), an expert in juvenile delinquency and supporter of re-educating the young prisoners with the help of the old ones, found on the right path, but belonging to the same age group.

Virgil Ierunca tells one of the most horrific de-humanization experience which our era knew. Prisoners tortured with a sadism really extravagant - if sadism can be otherwise - their torturers forcing them to torture back in turn, in order to be contested their victim quality itself. In the last phase of the cycle, the unfortunates are pressured to torture their best friends, as proof of their inner converting.

Everybody was tortured, everybody tortured. The ones that died there and the ones that survived were deprived even by their own unhappiness. Virgil Ierunca had the courage to enter in this hell and to become its historian, for the edification of the future generations”⁹.

1. THE TRIUMPH OF SUFFERING THROUGH FAITH

The communism fight was given especially against the faith in the eternal God, imposing an atheist politic. The communist steamroller closed and abolished many monastic settlements and parishes, some of them with a remarkable historical and cultural value, but it didn’t succeed to bring down the church from within the souls, fact observed among the political prisoners who brought the church in the interior of the thick and cold walls of the dungeons.

If for the modern man, the confessions of the political prisoners about the endured sufferings seem beyond endurance¹⁰, for these the daily torture was transformed in the joy of martyrdom for Christ and for the nation.

Faith, hope in divine reward and the love for God and for the country gave them power to raise above the suffering and to suffer with Christ. As regards the aspect of faith of the political prisoners, these “bandits” that went against the communist ideal, we can distinguish several categories: (1) the practicing Christians, before and during detention, which actually brought their detention; (2) the formal Christians, where ones met in prison the value of Christian living and followed the path of consummation; (3) the non-Christians and the apostate Christians among whom some, impressed by the life and love of the practicing Christians, started to practice frequently their faith in Jesus Christ.

The torturers easily picked their informers among the non-believers, because their power of resistance in front of torture was very low. The despair and the poor living conditions from the prison, decimated the prisoners spiritually and physically¹¹.

⁹ Virgil Ierunca, *Fenomenul Pitești*, Editura Humanitas, București 2013, p. 5.

¹⁰ Dumitru Bacu, *Pitești. Centru de reeducare studențească*, ed a IV-a, Editura Christiana, București, 2011, p. 32.

Through the intense living of the faith and through the permanent search of being with and in Jesus Christ, the prisoners escaped in transcendent, and the suffering turned into joy, truly feeling freedom. According to Saint Paul the Apostle, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (*Hebrews* 11:1). Faith is a connection beyond nature of the man with God and it moves him from this fleeting world in the eternal world. Through faith, the man allows God to work in and through him. The definition of faith given by Saint Paul the Apostle can be easily checked by looking at Christ’s confessors from the communist dungeons from Romania. These looked to the heavenly promises, to the unseen richness and wanted them longingly, fact for which they assumed suffering and torture as a path (road) together with Christ on Golgotha Mountain, to taste afterwards the light of Resurrection. Faith has been to these oppressed people the only pillar of support which strengthened them during this fight and helped them not to be afraid of chains and slapping.

This painful challenge through which the confessors of the 20th century went through proved to be an opportunity for salvation, because “for though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them” (*Wisdom* 3:4-6). And these, just like the martyrs of the first Christian centuries, had the belief that physical and moral suffering they went through was their path to salvation. This persecution taken by the communist partisans against faith was allowed by God to offer to the Romanian people the chance to shine in the first line in God’s army with faith’s weapons against the ones that wanted to kill God from the Romanian soul. In this regard, father Arsenie Papacioc, one of the well-known confessors of the extermination regime offered by Aiud prison, claims that: “People’s big mistake out in the world is that they cannot stand suffering and that it is the only action, the only preoccupation, the only living against all that is bad under the devil’s patronage. Who runs away from the persecution, runs away from God, claims St. Theodore the Studite. The church needs persecutions, because they wake you up, keep you awake and it’s a fight”¹². The suffering the Romanian people has gone through was God’s gift to raise him up, to show him victorious in front of those who wished to erase him the Christians identity. Humiliation, mockery, the permanent and systematic torture meant to destroy the human being, suffered in the name of justice and of the Christian faith transformed the losers, as they seem to the world, in heavenly heroes, in true conquerors.

The power of enduring in suffering of Christ’s martyrs during communism thrived from the power of the Cross. As our Lord Savior Jesus Christ embraces the cross from love for the human being, triumphing over the sin and death, in the same way, the martyrs accept suffering with love to triumph, through God’s grace, over the enemies of faith. Their patience was God’s gift which was pouring abundantly over those who assumed the cross of the martyrdom for the great Truth, for Jesus Christ, and for the nation as well. For this reason, these unfairly convicted to hard prison and labor for many years often speak about the joy in time of suffering. Father Dimitrie Bejan, another martyr of the 20th century, confesses about the tormenting years from the communist dungeons. “The sufferings from

¹¹ The document-book of memoirs of Ioan Ianolide, *Întoarcerea la Hristos. Document pentru o lume nouă*, ed. a II-a, Editura Bonifaciu, București presents only in a small percentage the hell of perverting the souls. The ones who lived the reeducation “in a state of freedom” cannot understand the terror of reeducation from the dungeons of the political prisoners.

¹² Arsenie Papacioc, *Veșnicia ascunsă într-o clipă*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2014, p. 55.

there have transformed hell into joy! It was the cross of joy! Who receives suffering as given by God himself, the cross of life transforms into joy! The joy of redemption! You can feel such a joy, especially when you suffer unjustly”¹³.

Our Lord Savior Jesus Christ calls over the centuries to those suffering in the name of faith and truth: “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you”. (*Matthew 5:10-12*). This verdict prophesies us that the persecutions against the rightful confessors are an occasion of joy for these, exactly for the heavenly reward that awaits them, that crown of holiness that revealed itself through an angel to the first martyrs of Christianity. Some of the political prisoners of communism have tasted the sweetness and peace of the Heavenly kingdom. Some of the prisoners have reached perfection, even up to forgive and love the torturer. For example, Father Gherasim Iscu, who had God’s grace shining inside of him, “before leaving this world, he made a gesture that showed to everyone present the extend of his holiness. That prisoner, Vasilescu, the torturer from Poarta Albă, has arrived to Târgu Ocna too, with the lungs devoured by tuberculosis. On December 25, 1951, Father Iscu asked to be gotten out of bed and taken to the bedside of Vasilescu, located in the same room. With the greatest Christian love he washed his face, kissed him and offered him forgiveness for his sins. Vasilescu confessed to his victim from the canal and with his tears streaming down his face, received Christ in his body and soul, achieving the peace he needed. Father Gherasim was put back to bed and, at his request, prayers have been read, then he left to God hearing angelic chants.”¹⁴.

2. THE CELL – CHURCH AND HEAVEN

Through the faith in God and the love towards Him, the wickedness of the ones obedient to the communist atheism, couldn’t harm the souls of these martyrs, as they detached from the villain environment, living in the sky, and at the same time they lowered the sky in the darkness of the dungeon. If for the people who condemned these, the prison seemed a narrow, dirty, suffocating space, for the confessors the cell widened and became a space of the divine presence, an infinite sky where they found themselves in front of God. “In our cell it’s God’s heaven”¹⁵, confessed Father Dimitrie Bejan.

The confessions of the persecuted for faith talk about the pure prayer during detention. The sufferings, the deprivation, the humiliation brought them closer to God in humbled prayer. The prayer full of hope in God’s grace transfigured the condemned figure of the sentenced over his own power: starvation, misery, vicious beatings. Thereby, the prisoner watched quietly and peacefully everything that happened to him, thanking God, just like Job in the middle of the trash, because he could suffer all these for the glory of God, being himself like Christ on the wooden cross. About the prayer experienced in the communist dungeons, father Sofian Boghiu confesses: “In prisons we were so well guarded, so constrained, that we could only think of God... The man, usually prays powerfully when he is in trouble. The prisons were also truly some big troubles... The prayers of the imprisoned were received by God; with all the misery, with all the wickedness ordered

¹³ Dimitrie Bejan, *Bucuriile suferinței – Viața unui preot martir*, Hârlău – Iași, 2002, p. 43.

¹⁴ Fabian Seiche, *Martiri și mărturisitori români din secolul XX. Închisorile comuniste din România*, Editura Agaton Făgăraș, 2010, p. 302.

¹⁵ Dimitrie Bejan, *Bucuriile suferinței...*, p.89.

against the poor prisoners, they all had a serenity and a joy that couldn't come from anywhere but from above, from God. The prayers of the imprisoned were similar to the ones of the Holy Fathers from the wasteland or of the many martyrs burnt at the stake, who, with the fire burning under, were joyful and were thanking God for this sacrifice that they brought to His Holiness¹⁶. The humbled prayer through which they got closer to God, not only that brought them joy, but helped them to clear their sins, as the feeling of sinfulness became acute in the presence of the Sky, and an excess of tears overflowed washing all the dirt of the sin. The young Valeriu Gafencu, one of those political prisoners for whom prison represented the chance of his spiritual transfiguration and knowledge of God, confesses in one of his letters: "I have times in my prison life when I cried with irrepressible tears, realizing the nothingness of my human nature, the glory of God, love. In these tears I've found the greatest happiness I have ever lived"¹⁷. In the pure prayer, the prisoners found God's most important gift - love, and in its light they learn to love the whole world, including the ones that persecuted them and were their executioners. We can notice once more looking at this new martyrs of the Romanian nation the gestures full of love of our Lord Savior Jesus Christ, Who didn't ask for the ones who crucified him revenge, but their forgiveness. "I was praying permanently to God and I loved them all", and in other place he declared in an interview: "I pray for them that God doesn't count this sin!", referring not only to the tortionaries, but also to the informers of the Security¹⁸.

The prayer of the martyr-prisoners most of the times combined with free-will or imposed fasting and with mercy. Even if food was lacking in proteins, insufficient, some of the prisoners gave up food during fasting days, offering it to those who didn't satisfy their hunger or were too weak. Giving up to oneself for the other was an often met practice between the political prisoners.

The prison became through the presence of the arrested priests¹⁹ a bright Church as well, despite the misery, the darkness and the obstacles of the Security. Not infrequently, the prison became a liturgical space, where, whispered, mumbled, the priests performed the Holy Liturgy in the presence of the prisoners. About this, father Arsenie Papacioc tells: "Everyday we used to rehearse the moments of the Holy Liturgy. We had a bowl of water and 300 grams of barley bread. We considered the bowl as a Holy Grail and we went through all the moments of the Holy Liturgy. After that we shared that bread to the prisoners and told them: «I cannot tell you this is the Holy Communion, because there are many elements missing, but that it's more than communion wafer, that I can say!»"²⁰. Other Holy Sacraments of the Church were committed too, like confession and baptism. Many prisoners, facing the imminence of death and aware of the sinful state, were asking many times to the priests to confess them. As not all of them found themselves in the same cell with a priest, the sacrament of confession was made through the Morse code, knocking in the cell's pipes. As regards the orthodox baptism for the prisoners belonging to other religions, this was made in secret, very careful, as father Nicolae Steinhardt confesses "from wormy

¹⁶ Mihai Andrei Aldea, „O arătare minunată a Părintelui Sofian de la Antim” în *Din temnițe spre sinaxare*, volul coord. de Danion Vasile, ed. a III-a, Editura Areopag, București, 2013, p. 106.

¹⁷ Ioan Ianolide, *Întoarcerea la Hristos. Document pentru o lume nouă*, ed. a II-a, Editura Bonifaciu, București, 2012, p. 132.

¹⁸ Dimitrie Bejan, *Bucuriile suferinței...*, pp. 94, 141.

¹⁹ A book with clear information regarding over over 1000 priests going through the dungeons in the time of communist terror is the work of Vasile Manea, *Preoți ortodocși în închisorile comuniste*, ed. a III-a, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2004. The list is not final, that's for sure.

²⁰ Arsenie Papacioc, *Veșnicia ascunsă...*, p. 57.

water and quick spirit”²¹. With all these, the joy of orthodoxy flooded the whole being of the new man, brightened, giving him the gift of love and forgiveness in that austere place. The same father, describing us his condition after baptism, confesses: “more and more frequent happiness assaults rush on me. You would say that each time the besiegers go higher and they strike with more power, with more precision. Therefore is true, it is true that the baptism is a holy mystery, that there are holy mysteries. Otherwise, this happiness that surrounds me, embrace me, dress me, vanquish me, couldn’t be so unimaginably marvelous and whole. Silence. And an absolute lack of care. For everything. And a sweetness. In mouth, in veins, in muscles. Also a resignation, the feeling that I could do everything, the impulse to forgive everyone, a lenient smile, that spread everywhere, not localized on the lips. And a sort of gentle air layer around, an atmosphere resembling that of some childhood books. A feeling of absolute safety²².

Besides the hidden liturgical life and the daily prayer, the prisoners were having conversations on religious, hesychastic, philosophical, literary, scientific and many more themes, as much as they were allowed by the vigilant eye of the guardian. They were reciting after the Holy Gospels which some of them memorized or they were trying to memorize poems, most of them belonging to the veteran poets of the prisons: Nichifor Crainic²³, Radu Gyr²⁴ and others²⁵. At the same time they were trying to learn foreign languages or enrich their knowledge, using writing with a needle on the walls, on a piece of soap, on belts or the Morse code, to facilitate communication between the cells. These various preoccupations of the prisoners were necessary, because forced inactivity was as frightening as forced work.

The political prisoner’s communion in their love for each other and for God portrays the One Church, unshakeable by the attacks of the enemies. Through this they gained real freedom in God’s grace, even if the chains were more and more tighter. And in this freedom, they were living happened, that reward promised by Our Lord Savior Jesus Christ on the sermon on the mount to those who will endure persecution, disgrace, denigration in His name. “I’m happy, cause if my physical freedom is restricted by human law, in exchange I was given spiritual freedom through the sacrament of love and this spiritual freedom is the most precious gift I could ever win in this world full of vanity. Only to the extent that we serve to God, we serve to the salvation of the nation, to his spiritual renewal”²⁶, said Valeriu Gafencu.

CONCLUSIONS

The political prisoners assumed their sacrificed in the name of Truth, revealing themselves through this as descendants of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the martyrs of the first christian centuries. These contemporary martyrs survived in the communist lion’s den thanks to their unshakable faith in God, the One Who gave them power to endure all.

²¹ Nicolae Steinhardt, *Jurnalul fericirii*, Editura Mănăstirea Rohia, Rohia, 2005, p. 91.

²² Nicolae Steinhardt, *Jurnalul...*, p. 92.

²³ The first two volumes of poems, edited in 1990, under the signature of Nichifor Crainic, came out through the struggle of those from Roza vînturilor Printing House. The titles of the volumes are: *Poezii alese 1914-1944, în selecția autorului și Șoim peste prăpastie. Versuri inedite create în temnițele Aiudului*.

²⁴ A volume of poems, cared by Simona Popa, the daughter of the poet Radu Gyr, was printed at Marineasa Publishing House, at Timișoara, in the year 1992. The title of the volume is *Sângele temniței*Balade*.

²⁵ A volume full of poems, with 71 authors, was published in 2010, at Petru Vodă Monastery, entitled: *Poeți după gratii*.

²⁶ Ioan Ianolide, *Întoarcerea...*, p. 135.

Although the communist leaders and their descendants tried especially by force to remove the faith in the eternal and loving God, all they succeeded was to give the Romanian people saints martyrs, who shine miraculously in God's Kingdom. Through their sacrifice, the faith's enemies were defeated, and the light of victory shines over the Romanian Orthodox Church, which today honors them as heroes who didn't sell their souls in front of the atheist communists.

Faith has been for the political prisoners, sentenced as "enemies of the people", their most powerful weapon in front of the evilness of the torturers. Receiving suffering as a path to Golgotha along with Jesus Christ, they transformed the dungeon's hell into heaven, the torment into joy, starvation into feast from God's grace, cold into heavenly warmth, isolation into ecclesiastical communion, hate into love and forgiveness.

The 20th-century martyrs represent to us, the ones living today, guidelines of steadiness in faith and love towards the nation. Anchoring in God was back then the only viable solution and remains even today to save the identity of our human unity as persons and as a nation.

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