Testimony from within the *Anchetă*: The Ordeal of Anton Golopenția[1]

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Almost all of the testimony about the Romanian Gulag we have been able to consult reflects the memoirs of former political detainees, in most cases post-facto recreations of events that took place many years before. While the accuracy of some of these memoirs has been challenged, we should remember that it depended to a large extent either on the phenomenal memory of the former detainee in his or her new guise as author (Ion Ioanid being the most obvious example) or on a collaborative effort by several participants to verify names, events, procedures, arbitrary punishment and executions. What is singularly lacking is direct testimony, whether in the form of letters sent to loved ones or of actual journals smuggled out of prison. None so far has come to light, although there are hints in some testimonies that at least in the early years (1947-48) sympathetic jailers and resourceful detainees may have found a way to smuggle out a few letters and journals. This clamping down on any exchange of information was not the case in Fascist Italy or Franco's Spain, or in former Socialist countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, or even in the Soviet Union itself. Witness the cases of Václav Havel and Andrei Sinyaski[2]. Then too in post-Fascist Italy there is the recent discovery of transcripts in the State Archives of secret recordings of conversations between prisoners that took place in the "privacy" of their cells[3]. Several Romanian detainees have also made passing reference to the possibility of similar secret recordings in the Romanian Gulag, and this is clearly an area that needs to be explored by future generations of scholars. Otherwise, the factual, material evidence that would satisfy an archeologist or historian is scant in the extreme. We do not even have the final-hour messages scrawled by Italian prisoners awaiting execution on the walls of their cells or of the caves in which they were destined to meet their deaths.[4] The memorization of

[1] The present article is a a revised and enlarged version of Chapter 10 in *Mărturii de după gratii; Experiențe române şi italiene* by Michael M. Impey, translated by Dan Brudaşcu, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Sedan, 2007 (editor's note).

[2] Václav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, translated from the Czech with an introduction by Paul Wilson (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1988), first published as *Dopisy Olze* in 1983. For Andrei Sinyaski, see the section on him in *Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader*, edited, with an introduction and notes, by Clarence Brown, revised and updated version (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985), p. 481-84.

[3] Ernesto Rossi, *Nove anni sono molti; Lettere dal carcere 1930-39*, a cura di Mimmo Franzinelli, con una testimonianza di Vittorio Foa (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2001). See Franzinelli's preface to this edition, "Lettere oltre le sbarre," *op.cit.*, p. xivi.

[4] See the exhibition *Desperate Inscriptions; Graffiti from a Nazi Prison* at the Hofstra Museum in Hempstead, NY (September 4-November 10, 2002), and the short accompanying essay by Stanislao G. Pugliese, Guest Curator, which will be published in an expanded version with additional photos by the Bordighera press (Lafayette, IN). We are grateful to a friend and collaborator, Martha Birchfield, who teaches at LCC in Lexington, KY, for having forwarded this information to us by email.

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poems or songs composed in prison (those of Gyr, Crainic, and many others) is impressive, as is the occasional notation carried out surreptitiously hidden in the soles of prisoners' footwear, but in its totality it is a distant recall of dwindling hopes, a clinging to religious beliefs, and the strength needed (but not always found) to resist the brutality and indignities of prison life.

Thus the recent publication of Anton Golopenția's *Ultima carte* goes a long way to filling the gap, the chasm even, left by the absence of direct evidence.[5] From our point of view, concerned as we have been in previous writing with the various dialogues between the prisoner/victim and his or her interlocutors, the title of Anton Golopenția's prison writings, chosen many years after his death by his daughter, is both poignant and instructive. For it constitutes the bringing together of his final, unpublished writings, whether they were the written declarations he made during the course of his *anchete* (1/17/1950–5/26/1951), the various letters and appeals he addressed to his inquisitors, to those higher up the chain of command, principally Miron Constantinescu,[6] and to his wife and children, or *Sugestii*, the document he later described as "hârtiile compromițătoare" (the compromising papers) and which he wrote some three months prior to his arrest, the existence of which he agonized over but decided not to reveal in the initial period of his *anchetă*. Anton Golopenția's interrogations only came to an end officially when his inquisitors, wishing to resume their questioning, found that he had been transferred on August 14, 1951 to the prison hospital of Văcărești, where he was to die supposedly of pulmonary complications brought about by T.B. on September 9, 1951.[7] In her introduction, Sanda Golopenția calls our attention to the

[5] Anton Golopenția, *Ultima carte; Text integral al declarațiilor în anchetă ale lui Anton Golopenția aflate în Arhivele S.R.I.*, volum editat, cu Introducere și Anexă de prof. dr. Sanda Golopenția, (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001). All citations in the text will be from this edition. We have for reasons of space and approach given short shrift to this massive undertaking. We would urge our readers to burrow more deeply into the voluminous material. They will find there, we believe, much that is shocking and disheartening, far more that is illuminating and heart-warming. Nor is this information to which only Romanians should have access. The guilt and shame at watching the destruction, or rather, for reasons of honesty and objectivity, the unintended self-destruction of a worthy individual, is something we should all share and put to good purpose in our own day and age.

[6] We have referred to Miron Constantinescu in the text of this chapter as a colleague. In fact, he was a sociologist whom Anton Golopenția had originally trained to undertake research in the field, and who later became, largely because of his Communist beliefs, the director of the State Planning Commission, and thus AG's superior in the two years the latter served as Acting Director of the I.C.S. (Institutul Central de Statistică). As to the precise nature of their relations, especially after MC's release from the Caransebeș concentration camp, we would prefer to leave this to the inter-flow of an ongoing one-sided dialogue engaged in by AG in his declarations, memoranda, and letters of appeal from detention.

[7] This is the official reason for AG's death, as attested in the death certificate and in other sources. But Sanda Golopenția, probing testimony by the former *anchetator,* I. Șoltuțiu, before the special Party Commission formed in 1967 to investigate the death of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, raises the possibility that her father did not die solely from natural causes. Thus, in her introduction to *Ultima carte* (p. LXXXIII), she states that according to Șoltuțiu's testimony "mai-marilor săi, în timpul anchetei de la Securitate *ar fi fost pusă la cale prin extenuare fizică și neanchetare moartea unor martori* (printre care sunt enumerați H. Zilber, care a supraviețuit regimului de exterminare, și Eugen Cristescu și A. Golopenția, care au decedat) [those higher up the chain of command, during the period in which the Securitate conducted its investigation, would have set in motion (through physical exhaustion and a break in contact between the accused and his interrogators) the death of certain witnesses (among whom are named H. Zilber, who survived the extermination regime, and Eugen Cristescu and A. Golopenția, who died–our italics]. The inference here is that both Cristescu and Golopenția met their deaths not because of indifference and benign neglect but because of a deliberate policy set in motion by persons unnamed in the PCR hierarchy. Not death as a result of harsh treatment, poor food, and lack of medical

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fact that her father's *anchetă* was not one continuous process but a series of extended interrogations (whose oral versions he later transcribed and condensed in the solitude of his cell), and that these interrogations were interrupted by no less than six intervals, one lasting as long as four and a half months, during which time the prisoner was left to brood over his fate.

In two annexes, Sanda Golopenția includes her father's correspondence that the Securitate confiscated, correspondence in the years1943-48 with people who figured directly or indirectly with his involvement in the Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu affair and with his own professional activities during this period, as well as declarations made by participants in the Pătrășcanu trial that had a bearing on Anton Golopenția's conduct, later testimony by former *anchetatori*, themselves under investigation by a special Party Commission in 1967, and documents from the Golopenția family archives.[8] Clearly, it was Sanda Golopenția's intention to hold nothing back from prying eyes, however painful that decision must have been for her, and to provide posterity with as clear a record as possible of her father's *anchetă* and the events that led up to an arrest, like his death, cloaked in mystery.

Whatever the reasons for AG's arrest on January 16, 1950, it is clear that his *anchetatori*'s primary interest remained his involvement in Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu's projected flight. Sanda Golopenția makes the point in her introduction to *Ultima carte* (p. LXVI) that the precise reasons for her father's arrest remain unclear, given the fact that more than a year had passed since the detention of N. Betea, C. Pavel, and the others suspected of involving AG in their plans to spirit Pătrășcanu out of the country.[9] She also raises the possibility that this so-called flight may have been largely imaginary, possibly a fiction created by the investigators (p. LXVIII). Of greater significance to us is the question (hinted at in AG's own testimony) of whether Miron Constantinescu in the year prior to AG's arrest was offering him limited protection in the hope that he would draw the proper conclusions and demonstrate openly and unequivocally his allegiance to the new Communist regime. The 1967 testimony of some of the *anchetatori* involved in the Pătrășcanu investigation would underline the role played by the Soviet advisers and what amounted to a personal vendetta against Pătrășcanu by Gheorghiu-Dej. This may account for the fact that far less attention was paid to AG's role in leading teams that in 1942-43 took a census of Moldavians living in the Ukraine, *de peste Bug* (that is, on Soviet soil, beyond the Bug river), as a prelude to Marshall Antonescu's renewed scheme for the homogenization of the Romanian territories through an exchange of minority populations. While he acted at the behest of Sabin Manuila, the director general of the I.C.S. (Institutul Central de Statistică), who in turn was

attention, therefore, but premeditated and cold-blooded murder.

[8] Sanda Golopenția is at present preparing for publication a complete and definitive edition of her father's correspondence. This will augment considerably the correspondence confiscated by the Securitate at the time of AG's arrest and which she has included in *Ultima carte*. The vastness of this edition and the wide range of notable figures with whom he corresponded are sure signs of his erudition, his intellectual and professional preparation, and the esteem with which he was held within and beyond the borders of his country, in fact, on both sides of the Atlantic.

[9] Indeed, she devotes an entire section (more than 17 pages) to "Motivele arestării şi detenției lui A.G." (*Ultima carte*, pp. LXVI-LXXXIII) and despite her exhaustive analysis she is unable, on the basis of the evidence available, to reach a definitive conclusion. At the very end of her introduction, she lists the issues that need further clarification, some of which we will touch upon (for instance, the question of whether Miron Constantinescu ever received or read the letters of appeal addressed to him by AG while in detention), and others that for reason of space we have not been able to deal with: *where* exactly and *when* was AG interrogated, and *by whom* (p. CX).

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following the orders of the Antonescu government, this was an involvement that in other circumstances would surely have been viewed by the Soviet authorities as a direct threat to their own sovereignty.

All of this was to change dramatically with what Sanda Golopenția has called her father's *declarația fatală* (fatal declaration, p. XXXII) of March 1, 1950. Fatal because it is here that AG first reveals the existence of a "concept" that he had written in three short mornings in September 1949, at a time when he was jobless, even deprived of bread coupons, and resentful at his dismissal and subsequent inability to find regular employment (p. 110): "Mi-am propus atunci să trasez nişte sugestii pentru planul de guvernare al celor ce ar conduce țara, dacă un viitor război ar aduce cu sine căderea de la putere a partidului comunist, pe care să i le trimit doctorului Manuila" (I proposed at that time to sketch out some suggestions for a plan that those who would govern the country [Romania] might utilize if a future war should lead to the fall from power of the Communist Party, and to send them to Dr. Manuila, "Declarație [Iată faptul absurd], *Ultima carte*, p. 85). AG had been mulling over for some time whether or not to bring these facts to the attention of his interrogators as a way of making a clean breast of things and preparing the ground for his eventual rehabilitation in the new Communist society. He did not foresee, or so he claims, the consequences of such revelations. Several key sections of *Sugestii* must have drawn the particular ire of his inquisitors: 1) the virtual certainty that if a new world war broke out, the Soviets would be defeated and American hegemony established after the collapse of the Communist system; 2) the critique of Marxism he offers when discussing the nature of democracy; and, above all, 3) the assumption that upper-echelon PCR leaders would be tried and condemned, while other party members would suffer "condamnare în bloc la câteva tipuri de pedepse" (condemnation en bloc to certain types of punishment, p. 98) when the process of "desovietizare" (or "debolşevizare," the term he uses elsewhere) was undertaken. If we play the Devil's Advocate, as we must in order to understand the inner workings of the *anchetă*, it seems clear that for both AG's *anchetatori* and their superiors, the very party hierarchs whom he targets for condemnation, this is a profoundly heretical document.[10] Not only does its overall premise rest on the defeat of the Soviet Union, but it then outlines the steps that would have to be taken in order to eradicate the last vestiges of Communist authority and bring Romania into line with the new economic and socio-political realities of a world dominated by a *Pax americana*. In addition, there is also the fact that, at least initially, it was his intention to send this document by clandestine means to his former boss, Dr. Sabin Manuila, then living in the United States, in the hope that these suggestions might help Romanian expatriates prepare for the time when they would return to their homeland and direct or assist the process of leading Romania along the path of a free-market, capitalist democracy.

Once arrested, AG found himself in an impossible situation. On the one hand, he was burdened with a desire to conduct himself with the scrupulous honesty that characterized his professional and private life. On the other, there was the possibility that a new *percheziție* might reveal the existence of a document that would compromise the positions he had taken, and which significantly he had failed to disclose despite repeated pro

[10] Even AG hints at such a reception in his fatal declaration of March 1, 1950: Îmi dădeam seama că, pentru un comunist convins, ele [*Sugestii*] erau sacrilege şi îmi spuneam că voi fi condamnat" (I recognized that, for a convinced Communist, they were sacrilegious and I told myself that I would be condemned, p. 86).

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forma disclaimers to the contrary. From the 184 declarations, biographical statements, memoranda and letters that comprise AG's prison testimony, we have chosen to focus our attention on the long letter/appeal of May 17-18, 1950, the first of two that he addressed to Miron Constantinescu, in order to examine what he calls "un lung proces de revizuire, echilibrare şi limpezire" (a long process of revision, re-stabilization, and clarification, p. 208) that he began in detention. In this letter he also explains the reasons that led him to write *Sugestii*, as well as his failure to burn or otherwise dispose of the document when he knew that he was likely to be arrested, and his subsequent failure to reveal its existence and whereabouts. It was on that day (March 1, 1950), he tells us, that "am avut un fel de asfixie şi de nebunie a celulei" (I had a sensation of asphyxiation and cell madness, p. 209). This we may interpret to mean that not only was he depressed at the conditions in his cell (lack of sunlight and human contact) and panic-stricken at the impasse that prevented a swift resolution to his case, but that any instincts he had to continue what he had come to see as pointless defiance were deadened and sapped of all energy. In other words, for him the die was cast, there had to be a solution to this dilemma, even if it meant taking further risks. It is unlikely, however, that he envisaged such a step would place his life in peril. By temperament and conviction he was incapable of nursing a deep-seated loathing of the regime and turning it, as Ioanid and many other fierce anti-Communists were to do, into an instrument of resistance to and even domination over his interrogators. But then, given his background and liberal beliefs, he could hardly have anticipated that prisoners in Romania would be done to death for their political, let alone–as he believed his case to be–their non-political actions.

The declaration of March 1, 1950 turned AG's world upside down. All his hopes of early release and a return to family and workplace were dashed by the vehement reaction of his *anchetatori* and their swift termination of contact. From this point on, everything he has declared previously is viewed with suspicion and he is subjected to far harsher discipline, involving *anchete în tură* (non-stop questioning), sleep deprivation, and physical abuse. "Am trăit de atunci în deznădejde" (From that moment I lived in despair, p. 199), he declares on April 13, and in another declaration on the same day he goes so far as to ask that he receive corporal punishment as a way of stimulating his memory (p. 200). It hardly seems possible that such a request was voluntary and not dictated by his inquisitors. Rather, it may be seen as the culmination of a process long established in Soviet circles of self-incrimination, self-indictment, and in this Romanian variant preordained punishment requested by the victim himself. The assumption must be that not only was AG threatened with corporal punishment but that this form of punishment was inflicted on him several times. As to the severity of its application we have only to recall the severe beatings Nicolae Mărgineanu endured before he made up his mind to embrace what he calls "the Untruth."[11] A month later (May 11, *Ultima carte*, p. 205), in a memorandum to his chief investigator, AG asks to be sent to the Danube Canal or to some other enterprise as a manual worker, but whether he would have survived the slave-like conditions he would have found there remains open to doubt. While he may be trying to foster an impression of compliance at the suggestion of his "anchetator milos" (the friendly interrogator in the customary investigative twosome), life in the open air, living and working alongside his fellow prisoners, must have

[11] Nicolae Mărgineanu, *Amfiteatre şi închisori (Mărturii asupra unui veac zbuciumat)*, ediție îngrijită şi studiu introductiv de Voicu Lăscuş, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1991, p. 148-57, 257-59.

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been an attraction for him, a way out of the nightmare that engulfed him. Six days later, he addresses his first letter/appeal to Miron Contantinescu; he does so from an acknowledged position of weakness, in the penitential voice that earlier in history a heretic or a self-declared sinner might have adopted in asking for forgiveness. It is an extraordinary situation for someone proud of spirit and an admitted atheist to couch his appeal in the form of a confession ("această mărturisire, p. 206) and address it to a Marxist ideologue as though he were a hierarch in Holy Church. But this would be to ignore the quasi-ecclesiastical trappings that so often accompanied private and public incantations of Communist dogma; after all, for the true believer, Marxism was the faith that superseded all others. In every sense, AG is faced with a latter-day anathema, and he believes, or he deludes himself into believing, that only MC, a former colleague who, as President of the State Planning Commission appointed him to replace Sabin Manuila as Director of the I.C.S. (Institutul Central de Statistică), could help him at this late stage.

And yet AG seems to have adopted the path of indirection in addressing MC, as though he were uncertain of the latter's response. He imagines a one-sided dialogue, in which he approaches his former upstart superior as a penitent, as a sheep perhaps that has strayed too far from the fold and is in danger of falling into a ravine. Given the concerns we have expressed elsewhere, we might ask: who precisely is the intended recipient in this missive? Clearly on one level, perhaps the most superficial, it is MC, on another the chief investigator and his fellow *anchetatori*, all of whom AG has been pressing to bring MC into the fray as the person best qualified to judge his actions, and ultimately those higher up in the PCR hierarchy. But at the same time, because this letter/appeal is part of a process of reorientation and self-justification, he himself may well be the hidden or suppressed interlocutor, since the very act of setting down on paper his innermost thoughts, his anguish and pent-up longings, must have been a challenge to someone as reserved and private as he was, and at the same time a tremendous consolation. Whether AG envisaged that his two letter/appeals would somehow reach a wider audience outside the prison system and make their claim on posterity, that he was engaged, consciously or not, in a form of literary creation, remains another tantalizing possibility.

This first letter/appeal was evidently begun immediately after AG underwent interrogation in the evening of May 17, then continued into May 18, and was followed by two short declarations made on the same day. We may reasonably conclude, therefore, that AG had to sacrifice for this purpose what little sleep-time he was allowed. He may go on to complain of detention "cu lipsa ei de cărți în care să mă ascund" (with its lack of books in which to bury myself, p. 209), but at least he was on occasion allowed the pen and paper that were necessary for him as an intellectual, as a man of letters, to collect and organize his thoughts, to reclaim his identity, no matter how painful and humiliating such a closely monitored process was in the circumstances. Sanda Golopenția reminds the reader that "foile și cerneala necesare redactării unei declarații îi erau date deținutului numai după ce, în urma interogării orale, se considera că s-a ajuns la 'rezultate' consemnabile sau, în mod excepțional și după cereri repetate, spre a scrie declarații de completare, memorii etc. (sheets of paper and ink for the redaction of a declaration were only granted to the detainee when, following oral questioning, it was deemed that results worth recording had been achieved or, more exceptionally and after repeated requests, in order to write supplementary declarations, memoranda, etc., p. XVIII). While this may be the logical explanation for the granting of

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such facilities, it does not fully explain how or why AG was allowed to write of his own volition no less than 33 declarations, letters, and memoranda, some of them of great length and complexity. If this were standard practice for all detainees held for interrogation in trials of great moment, it would be reasonable to expect that the Securitate archives will yield similarly invaluable testimonies, something that to our knowledge has not yet happened. Such privileges were constantly sought by other detainees, though rarely, if ever, conceded beyond the *anchetă* stage, unless it was to resolve the grim determination of hunger strikers. The acquisition, moreover, contrary to regulation, of writing or reading materials, a pencil stub, even part of a book or newspaper, and their successful concealment, represented a triumph of ingenuity and the courage of shared responsibility for Romanian political detainees, since their discovery would have led to severe reprisals. While in AG's case there can be no question of illegal possession, there is evidence, we would argue, of successful manipulation–with or without their knowledge and assent–of the concessions his interrogators were disposed to make.

The idea of addressing himself to Miron Constantinescu was, as he put it, his "raza de nădejde care-mi îngăduia să mai suport viața" (ray of hope that allows me to continue living). The reality of the situation was to be very different, for "Se pare că ancheta reîncepe azi" (It appears that the interrogation resumes today, p. 206) and his hopes came to naught.[12] Clearly, the resumption of oral questioning referred to here entailed making written declarations afterwards and afforded him access to writing materials and thus the opportunity to pen this letter/appeal. Speaking as much to himself as to Miron Constantinescu, AG renders his situation in brutal but apposite terms: "Angrenajul m-a prins" (The machinery has me in its grasp, p. 206). Like the *ingranaggio* evoked by Italian *antifascisti*, it is the right term for his predicament. How can you escape a past of complicated, intermeshed dealings and rational assessments when your profession is that of a statistician and sociologist of unquestioned expertise? It is a matter that AG himself addresses: "ți- e greu să scapi nestrivit, dacă ai fost funcționar sub regimuri succesive într-o instituție, atât de amestecat în multe toate, ca Institutul de Statistică şi ai mai fost pe deasupra şi cu nervi, pripit şi neastâmpărat" (And it is difficult to escape without being crushed, if you have been a functionary under successive regimes in an institution involved in every activity imaginable as the Institute of Statistics was, and if you have been in addition irritable, rash and agitated, p. 206).[13] Even for a man who had served his country loyally, acting as a technical adviser at both the Viena *arbitraj* in 1940 and the Paris Peace Conference of 1946, the answer is that you cannot avoid such an entanglement, or you can do so only with the greatest difficulty and with a measure of luck: "N-am ştiut face față unei epoci de transformări politice" (I didn't know how to come to terms with an epoch of political change, p. 206). The intermediary, neutral, carefully-balanced position he advocated, his natural inclination to explore all sides of an issue, and his reliance on objective data, will prepared him for political commitment, pro or contra. The crux of the matter is that in a volatile, contentious, loyalty-testing, Manichean setting, AG was unwilling

[12] It is very difficult to tie AG's declarations to the specific times when he was interrogated. In order to resolve this apparent discrepancy, we may surmise that either he began the letter/appeal *before* his interrogation in the evening of May 17, or he is referring here to the resumption of a series of interrelated interrogations.

[13] This is a characterization that Miron Constantinescu himself attributes in part to AG. Thus in a letter addressed to AG on March 31, 1948, MC refers to an earlier letter written to him by AG and deems it to have been "nervoasă" (*Ultima carte*, p. 446).

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to discard the impartiality of a professional discipline and set aside the contacts and friendships he had acquired over the years. Instead, he offers an extended *mea culpa* for his failure to reorientate himself politically, and his "Aş fi trebuit să caut calea" (I should have found a way [to declare my allegiance to the Romanian Communist Party], p. 207) becomes a leitmotif of delayed commitment and missed opportunities. The reasons he offers initially for not joining the PCR (I was wedded only to scientific truth and disadvantaged by my bourgeois scruples, p. 207) ring a trifle hollow when compared to the strong reservation he had expressed in *Sugestii*: "mă temeam că colectivizarea dintr-odată ar putea costa multe vieţi de om în Banat şi Ardeal, unde proprietatea individuală e mai înrădăcinată decât în Uniunea Sovietică" (I was afraid that sudden collectivization might cost many lives in the Banat and in Transylvania, where the ownership of private property is more deeply rooted than in the Soviet Union, p. 207). AG uses a metaphor worthy of Nerval to express his state of mind at this time: "Aşa alergam şi eu, cu ochii des[c]hişi, în prăpastie" (That is how I ran, with open eyes, right into the precipice, p. 208). While such declarations often represented the conclusion of several previous interrogations, in one sense, the provision of pen and paper constituted a trap for AG, indeed one perhaps devised by his *anchetatori*, since it would appear that he always revealed more in his voluntary written declarations than he did under oral questioning.

When finally on March 1, 1950 he experienced his moment of asphyxiation and cell madness and revealed the existence of his hidden manuscript, he did not realize, or so he claims, the consequences of this revelation ("Nu realizam consecinţele," p. 209). In other words, it is only after the hostile reaction of his inquisitors that he realizes that he has lit a slow-burning fuse that will lead to his own destruction. He is overcome with remorse for the colleagues he may have dragged down unintentionally, the peril he has placed his family in, and the squandering of his intellectual endeavors ("risipirea muncii mele intelectuale," p. 210). Now, looking back on what he outlined in *Sugestii*, on the inevitability of another war, he admits that "nu m-am gândit la cei cel puţin 500,000 morţi pe care-i va costa din nou la noi în Republică" (I didn't think of the at least half a million dead that [such a war] would once again cost us here in the Republic, p. 210). His concerns foreshadow those of Ion Diaconescu, whose awareness of the reality of atomic warfare allowed him to dismiss out of hand the cavalier expectations of so many of his fellow detainees ("Vin americanii" / The Americans are coming!).[14] Just as he acknowledges that he had failed in his day-to-day affairs to anticipate the impact of class struggle and a Dictatorship of the Proletariat that aimed to build a new society on the bones of the old one, so here, in his letter of appeal to MC, AG fails to take into account "amestecul marilor industriaşi în viaţa statului" (the interference of the great industrialists in the life of the state, p. 210). This surely is nothing more than anticipation of one of the burning issues of our own day, the threat that global capitalism under American hegemony constitutes for the fledgling economy of a country such as Romania that was denied by the advent of Communism its natural development and standing in a free-market world. While he recognizes the degree to which he has misjudged the turn of political events in his own country, "de vreme ce nu am aptitudini politice, ci sunt un om de carte" (since I have no natural disposition for politics, but am rather a man of books, p. 210), and, in a gesture of acquiescence to the demands of his interrogators,

[14] Ion Diaconescu, *Temniţa; Destinul generaţiei noastre*, cu o prefaţă de Zoe Petre, Bucureşti, Editura Nemira, 1998.

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acknowledges the fact that in the circumstances it would have been "normal" for him to be guided by the doctrines of Communism, AG enters very deep waters with his next affirmation: "că nu trebuie să mă sperie caracterul de religie, pe care-l are acesta [PCR], de vreme ce ştiu că, încă acum mai bine de o sută de ani, Saint-Simon a cerut, pentru însănătoşirea societăţii, ca pe lângă măsurile economice şi politice, să se păşească şi la constituirea unui nou creştinism, care să constitue cimentul unificator al relațiilor dintre indivizi şi popoare" (that I should not be afraid of the religious character, which [the PCR] has, since I know that, more than a hundred years ago, Saint-Simon sought, as a way of making society healthy, that alongside economic and political measures, a new Christianity should be brought into being, which would constitute the cement that binds together individuals and peoples, p. 210).

Of course, as AG knew only too well, Saint-Simon's dream of an utopian, Christian-based, Socialism was very different from the apocalyptical religious character he himself ascribes here to a Communist regime, especially the hard-nosed reality of a Marxist-Leninism that had no room for dissenters, apostates and heretics, or even for waverers, those who were unwilling to take the imaginative leap into political orthodoxy. What is crystal clear is that AG was voicing, at the height of Stalinism in Romania and under the severest restraints, ideas that no one would have dared to express in public or private, unless he or she knew beforehand that such observations were sanctioned at the highest level. And surely this was hardly the case with AG, caught as he was "în aceste frământări" (in these agonizing debates). Unlike other arrestees, who were careful, even under torture, to reveal only what they absolutely had to, his intellectual honesty and his training did not allow for successful equivocation: "Deşi sunt unul din oamenii cei mai demascați din R.P.R. şi jur, li se pare că sunt reticent, că mai ascund fapte, de dragul oamenilor, din instinct de conservare" (Although I am one of the most unmasked men of the R.P.R. [Republica Populară Română] and I swear that I am not hiding facts, it seems to them that I'm reticent and holding back information, because of my love for my fellow men and my instinct for self-preservation, p. 211). But, as we have seen, this unmasking was largely self-induced, dictated by hidden anxieties and compulsive honesty.

In the next two paragraphs of his letter/ appeal, AG attempts to set down on paper some constructive ideas that might assist the Communist regime in its policies. But in doing so he cannot avoid criticizing the present system, so that his approach–look what an experienced, creative mind can do for you!–rather than incur sympathy and interest, only increases his investigators' suspicions and the severity of their response. We should also remember that for the most part these *anchetatori* were not particularly well educated or overly imaginative men, and their way of dealing with the intellectual superiority of a detainee was to crush him in body and spirit and thus restore the "proper" balance in the relationship between Inquisitor and Victim. All told, this letter of appeal to an influential colleague, if colleague is the right word for a man who originally began his career under AG's tutelage, is a tortuous reassembling of the inner and outer motives that led him to write *Sugestii* and to engage in activities that could be viewed as hostile to the new Communist regime. Even after outlining the numerous projects he could undertake if he were set free, there is a sense that he knows he is appealing to those who in their disbelief will turn a deaf ear. In a follow-up memorandum to the *Procuror General* (or prosecuting attorney), he claims that he now sees his situation "cu ochiul străinului" (with the eye of an outsider,

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p. 216) and understands, repeating his earlier metaphor, that truly "angrenajul m-a prins."

In the first of two memoranda to the *Procuror General*, written on May 25, 1950, AG explains that *Sugestii* was the work of someone who was "dezechilibrat, preocupat unilateral de munca ştiinţifică şi profesională" (unbalanced, entirely focused on his scientific and professional work, p. 220), and subject to disastrous influences (Dr. Manuila, among others). These are pleadings that he has made before, only to have been ignored. Faced with a situation in which: "Mă găsesc de luni de zile în starea de mort între cei vii" (I have found myself for months on end like a dead man among the living, p. 221), AG declares that he has no hero-martyr fixation ("nu sunt în stare să fiu un erou-martir," p. 220); he merely wishes to return to the bosom of his family and become once more a productive member of society. In order to achieve these limited aims he now declares his willingness to side with the new revolutionary society, and addresses "un suprem apel" (a supreme appeal, p. 221) for clemency to those who have power of life or death over him.

In his second memorandum to the *Procuror General*, AG not only recognizes that his past tells against him, that "Neajutorat în viaţă, din pricina numeroaselor piedici pe care mi le puneam singur" (Receiving no help in planning my life, by reason of the numerous obstacles I myself created) he is his own best enemy, but he also maintains that prison is the place where he has learned to see the essential ("esenţialul, p. 222),[15] in other words, where exactly he went adrift, and that this in turn has brought about his "criza ...de maturitate" (his crisis of maturity). Once again, he captures this moment in the image of the unmasked self : "Sunt demascat şi vinele mi se cunosc pentru că mi-am părăsit atitudinea opoziţionistă de dinainte de arestare" (I have been unmasked and my offences are known because I have abandoned the oppositionist stance I displayed before my arrest, p. 222). How should we interpret here his use of *demascat*? Normally, the act of unmasking, the stripping away of a false identity or allegiance, the revelation of the true (or at least the dissimilar) self, is the work of outside parties, here the responsibility of his hitherto unsuspecting inquisitors. In AG's case, however, this unmasking of self, this revelation of acts and thoughts prejudicial to the Communist system, came about by his own hand and apparently of his own volition. When AG goes on to claim that he now experiences "remuşcări dureroase" (painful remorse, p. 223) for his past conduct and pleads for forgiveness and readmission ("Nu doresc decât să fiu acceptat cetăţean leal al Republicii, aderent al regimului"/ My only desire is to be accepted as a loyal citizen of the Republic and an adherent of the regime, p. 224), are these truly the first steps of conversion to a new creed? Whose word is *demascat*, that of his investigators or his own? AG now recognizes that he is "la marginea prăpastiei" (on the very edge of the abyss, p. 223), into which presumably he will fall unless he undergoes the rites of purification and sacred avowal. But is this conversion authentic? To us it seems more likely that AG is going through the motions of embracing the new regime and its Marxist-Leninist doctrines as a way of saving his life and protecting his family, as well as ultimately resuming a productive career. In short, he has abandoned one mask, only to don another, that of the crypto-democrat, who hid, or would have hid, his liberal democratic principles under the guise of Communist compliance (p. 219). He has chosen the path taken by many Sephardic Jews, who openly embraced Christianity in order to safeguard their loved ones and their own livelihood, but who also preserved, though carefully hiding them from view,

[15] In an earlier memorandum to his Chief Investigator, dated May 11, 1950, AG used the same phrase in a more precise context: "Văd esenţialul: patria, munca, familia" (I see the essential: country, work, family, p. 202).

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their attachments and loyalties to an ancestral, racial and religious heritage. This is not to say that AG intended to embrace Communism in theory or in practice; rather he accepted with great reluctance the necessity of following the path of token adherence that the vast majority of Romanian citizens were to take over the next 40 years, even if it meant stifling the very principles he held dearest and dutifully mouthing the slogans and platitudes of the party propaganda machine at rallies and political meetings. Whether of course AG's skeptical inquisitors would have accepted as genuine this latter-day conversion any more readily than the Spanish Inquisition accepted the protestations of pro forma *conversos* remains open to doubt. All the more so when he argues that the burning or destruction of *Sugestii*–which he now calls his "hârtiile compromițătoare" (compromising papers, p. 223)–would have allowed him to maintain absolute silence about his "oppositionist" conduct and thus be in a better position to negotiate his release from prison. If we look at his stance from the point of view of his *anchetatori*, AG wants to have it both ways: he berates himself for his foolhardiness in making such damaging revelations at the same time that he complains that their disclosure has been misinterpreted by his interrogators.

In one of the flights of literary fantasy that at times raise his testimony to the level achieved by Antonio Gramsci, AG compares himself to a modern Don Quixote: "Am dărâmat toate morile de vânt din conştiinţa mea, cu care, un alt Don Quijote, mă războisem copilăreşte decenii şi ani, punându-mi piedici în cale mie însumi" (I demolished all the windmills in my consciousness [and by implication conscience], windmills with which, as another Don Quixote, I had childishly waged war for decades and years, placing obstacles in my own path, pp. 223-24). These, we believe, are not the kind of words that his inquisitors would have placed in his mouth. Such an analogy comes from the deeper recesses of his mind and these are words that have meaning only for him as he stands, to cite Lucian Blaga, "la cumpăna apelor" (At the Waters' Divide), at the final crossroads of his life, or which may be intended for posterity. In more literal terms, AG presents himself as a victim of circumstance and poor timing. For him to have been a true adversary of Communism, he claims, he would have had to become a member of an opposition party (p. 221). He insists that his proposed adhesion to the Communist cause would carry "nu mai puțină seriozitate decât adeziunea altor intelectuali, care au găsit drumul după trei ani şi jumătate sau patru ani şi jumătate" (no less seriousness than the adhesion of certain intellectuals, who found their way [to the Party] after three and a half or four and a half years, p. 224). This is true enough, but we have to ask whether the adhesion of these intellectuals, whom Nicolae Mărgineanu for one castigated, was whole hearted or purely opportunistic. Was it not once again a matter of "Sauve qui peut"? Unlike others, who "realizează cu uşurință sau evită cu uşurință" (all too easily realize or avoid, p. 224) such political accommodations, he was not the man who could make–though these are not the terms he uses–a pact with the Devil! AG's plea for forgiveness and readmission, whether or not it is totally sincere, takes on increasingly imperative tones ("Iertați stăruința / Forgive my insistence, p. 225). Strangely for a declared atheist, his terminology at times verges on the religious: "păcatul față de copii, soție, lucrări" (the sins I committed against my children, wife, work projects, p. 224). In asking for rehabilitation "După un stagiu la închisoare" (After a term of imprisonment), he argues that he was merely an "om care a rătăcit, negăsind drumul" (a man who went astray, not finding the right path) and that his inquisitors should not sacrifice him by giving his "concept" an importance it never had in reality merely to fulfill the requirements of the Pătrăşcanu trial

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(p. 224). But seen from the point of view of his *anchetatori* this is hardly a realistic request; their concerns, or so they allowed themselves to believe, were not for the health of the individual, but for a society cleansed *in toto* of its past errors. At best, it shows that AG still had not fully grasped the magnitude of what he later calls in a heart-wrenching letter to his wife, Ştefania, the "mai multe infracţiuni de ordin politic" (many infractions of a political nature, p. 244) that he had committed.

Further letters, declarations and memoranda at times take the form of the general confession a catechist would make in order to be accepted into the Christian community or of a public act of self-criticism (the *auto-critică* of the Communist era) that would be required for re-acceptance into a society controlled by Marxist dogma. But in his final letter to Miron Constantinescu AG voices hopes and expectations that he surely knows have little chance of realization, even if this appeal for help should reach its destination. In these final, painful declarations it is not easy to distinguish between what he felt in his heart and what he was impelled to say under threat of physical abuse. We should bear in mind Sanda Golopenţia's admonition that "A departaja cu atenţie ceea ce aparţine discursului anchetatorilor de ceea ce aparţine discursului firesc al celui anchetat" (To carefully distinguish what belongs to the discourse of the *anchetatori* from what belongs to the natural discourse of the person undergoing interrogation) is a delicate operation; one that "este obligaţia morală a tuturor celor care încearcă să-i ghideze pe cititorii de astăzi prin hăţişurile întunecate ale epocii de care vorbim" (is the moral obligation of all those who seek to guide today's readers through the darkened thickets of the epoch we are speaking of). In writing about AG, in other words, we need to distinguish "scrisul liber" (free writing) from "scrisul în detenţie" (writing in detention, p. XIX).

Anton Golopenţia's decision to adopt a dual personality, to put on the mask of Marxist conformity, while retaining, deep within his psyche, those links to an intellectual and cultural heritage that were his *raison d'être*, was his way of surrendering to the inevitable. Honesty and loyalty count for little when a man is caught in the vice-like grip of the New Inquisition, and few are those who do not have a breaking-point. Perhaps the application of indirection, what Czeslaw Milosz called *ketman* in *The Captive Mind*, or even barefaced lying, might have offered a way of dealing with the suspicions and demands of the inquisitors, but this was not the manner in which AG confronted reality. His insistence, in a critical analysis of his ideas and exploits, that "omul de ştiinţă trebuie să evite orice fel de credinţă" (the man of science should avoid any kind of faith [religious beliefs], p. 250) may ring true today, but it was of little avail then. At the end of her introduction, Sanda Golopenţia says of her father: "Dintre toţi cei suprimaţi în procesul Pătrăşcanu, A.G. e, din multe puncte de vedere, figura cea mai tragică" (Among all those eliminated in the Pătrăşcanu trial, AG is, in many respects, the most tragic figure, p. CX). All the more so, we should add, because he did not share the Communist leader's view of the world and how it should be re-formed, or the jockeying for position of those around him. But from our perspective Anton Golopenţia's testimony represents far more than this. On one level, his story is emblematic of so many worthy individuals whose lives were snuffed out, not merely unjustly, but for neither rhyme nor reason. The fact that he died of an illness that almost certainly he contracted in prison and which went untreated, whether through indifference and neglect or as part of a conspiracy to eradicate potentially dangerous testimony, only heightens the sense of injustice and ultimate fatality that pervades his case. Then there is the

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extraordinary nature of his testimony and its almost miraculous appearance after some 50 years of total obscurity. Given the reservations we might express about the so-called "uniqueness" of the Romanian Gulag, or indeed of any part of it, we are reluctant to credit AG's testimony with such an absolute characterization, but at the present time it stands alone and we might say unchallenged, although there is always the possibility that similar testimonies will come to light. Whether they would match, if they do indeed exist, the intense drama of a man grappling alone and unaided with the dark forces of the human condition (that *evil* advanced by exegetes as the only explanation of the Holocaust) and the imaginative leaps he is prepared to take in order to bring temporary order and clarity to the subversion and distortion of reality is a matter for others to ponder and decide.

In a very real sense, *Ultima carte* completes a 20th-century trajectory that began in Italian Fascist prisons, where it was possible for political detainees to write letters regularly to their loved ones, even by sleight of hand or the use of code words or secret ink to friends and accomplices, that crossed the yawning chasm of silence and forbidden communication that was to be the fate of their Romanian counterparts, only partly filled by later memoirs and reconstructions, and which came to rest with Anton Golopenția's testimony from within the prison system. Testimony that not only comprises all (or all that still exist) of the written declarations he made in his cell after exhausting interrogation, as well as at times extended memoranda to his interrogators and letters that were never sent to his wife and children, but also two letters of appeal he wrote to Miron Constantinescu, who in all probability never learned of their existence. As testimony it is partly biography, partly self-justification (a virtual *apologia pro vita sua*), partly confession, and partly subconscious soul-searching, but above all it is a work of vast imaginative proportions, which allows it to stand alongside the great prison testimonies of the distant (Boethius) and the recent (Bonhoeffer) past. To our knowledge, nothing quite like it has been published in any of the countries where political prisoners were detained by totalitarian regimes or even by regimes that maintained a simulacrum of democracy. It is not a record of political opposition. For this we have the memoirs of Ioanid, Ioniţoiu, Diaconescu and many others. It is not an attempt to replicate the sufferings of dignitaries, such as Giurescu, of the old regime. It has something in common with Mărgineanu's testimony, since both he and Golopenția were leftist-leaning intellectuals, men of great distinction in their professions, who preferred to stay out of politics, but who were caught in the maw of fictitious trials based on fabricated evidence. For Golopenția the supreme sacrifice that a hero-martyrdom complex entailed had few attractions. Neither did it for Mărgineanu, who had the good sense to compromise his principles before it was too late. At a final reckoning, Mărgineanu had little or nothing to reveal. For Golopenția, the matter was not so simple: from the moment of his arrest he was tormented by the thought that the *Sugestii* he had written for Romanian expatriates opposed to Communism might be discovered in a follow-up search of his house, so that, finally, under extreme physical and mental pressure, he decided to reveal the document's existence. That he did so is a matter of the greatest regret, for it undoubtedly set the stage for his death. And yet, if he had not done so, we would in all probability not be reading the declarations he made in detention, declarations that form the principal part of *Ultima carte*, a work that must rank as one of the most provocative, harrowing, and inspired in human history.

This meticulous compilation, in which, with commendable restraint, more than a half century after Anton Golopenția's death, his daughter traces backwards and forwards the

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events, personalities and professional activities mentioned in his detailed and unavoidably repetitive declarations, stands alongside the letters and writings from prison in Fascist Italy. It would be true to say that Anton Golopenția experienced a deep conflict within himself at a time of eschatological crisis in his country and throughout East and Central Europe. He felt himself being pulled in more than one direction at the same time. On the one hand, the lure of much-needed reforms, especially for peasant communities (some 70% of the population), still largely living at a subsistence level and lacking the facilities that are so much a part of modern existence (electricity, good access roads, proper health care, and above all a support structure for marketing products), which democratic Socialism might have brought (and did bring to many Western countries), but which the PCR incorporated and redefined in its sweeping restructuring of every aspect of Romanian society. On another, the belief, widely held among Romanian intellectuals and one to which AG subscribed, that the overthrow of Communism through American intervention was inevitable. And then there was the central position he preferred to embrace in the face of extreme solutions from both the left and right, according to which changes would only be made on the basis of observable data and where caution and common sense, rather than abstract theory and ideology, should be the overriding principles.

In fact, in *Sugestii* he appears to have combined aspects of all three approaches. The defeat of Communism and the establishment of a *Pax americana* would lead to a "cale liberă investiţiunilor americano-europene" (an opening up to American-European investments) and a "stabilitate internă prin punerea vie pe temelia unei democraţii efective" (internal stability based on effective democracy), as well as "realizarea de federaţii cu ţările vecine" (the realization of federation with neighboring countries, p. 89) as a way of lessening long-simmering border disputes. Such measures, of course, could be achieved with the help of a Socialist (or Social Democratic) party, provided that it abandoned its narrow ideological positions and became truly representative (p. 90). Evidently, AG had not imagined that a doctrinaire Communist party could undergo a similar transformation, as for instance happened in Italy and in a number of Central European countries. He lays particular stress on the necessity of a complete overhaul of the intellectual and moral life of the country "din chiar prima zi a instalării lui pe teritoriul ţării" (from the very first day of the installation within the country's borders [of a new regime that utilized the skills and expertise of Romanian expatriates and foreign nationals], p. 94). While it is questionable whether this indeed happened, given the fact that the old guard clung to power and was adept at exploiting the new political realities, it can be claimed that at least two of the objectives of the moral and intellectual reconstruction he outlines for Romania have in large measure been met: "înlăturarea efectelor izolării de cea mai parte a lumii din ultimul deceniu" (the elimination of the effects of the last decade's isolation from the greater part of the world) and "punerea ştiinţei din România şi a concepţiilor etice şi politice ale românilor pe baze mai largi" (the broadening of the foundation of science in Romania and of the ethical and political thinking of Romanians). The first of these objectives, however, "evidenţierea erorilor ideologiei socialiste şi bolşevice şi prezentarea concepţiilor democratice, prin care ar urma să fie înlocuite" (making known both the errors of Socialist and Bolshevik ideology and the democratic concepts that are supposed to replace them, p. 94), has met with greater resistance. Indeed, it is precisely the publication of testimonies and public records such as *Ultima carte* that in the absence of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission can go part of

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the way to filling such *lacunae* as these. Ultimately, the truth must and will come out.

AG also foresees the need in the chaos that follows the change of regime to protect "bunurile de Stat" (State property) against the vengeful fury of a humiliated populace (p. 97). What he does not say, presumably because he did not anticipate a slow and gradual change of power, is that it would also be necessary to prevent the country's wealth from falling into the hands of those who previously had control over it or of the new-era *mafiosi* and the Robber Barons who appear whenever newly emerging and largely uncontrolled free-market economies allow them to operate with impunity.[16] It is instructive that in Italy's case it was Ernesto Rossi (an *antifascista* and political detainee in his own right) who, in the early days of the new Italian Republic, was given the task of managing the residual material the Allies left behind and the funds that became available under the Marshall Plan. The letters from prison of Italian *antifascisti* demonstrate how they were constantly thinking ahead to a future in which Italy would once again take her place among free and democratic European nations. Ernesto Rossi, together with Altiero Spinelli, was among the very first to envisage a transnational entity such as the European Union in which Italy could play a productive role. Anton Golopenţia looked forward to the future in similar manner. His idea of a federation (or perhaps co-federation) of Romania with Hungary, Yugoslavia, as it was then, Bulgaria, and perhaps even the Ukraine, was more limited in scope but no less breathtaking in vision. With the exception of his *Ultima carte*, the record of such visionary thinking for Romania is more disquieting and until the time of the dissenters in the seventies and eighties is distinguished by its paucity. In the main, Romanian political prisoners preferred to think largely in terms of resistance to the death, of the overthrow of the Communist regime by armed revolt or foreign intervention, and a return to the quasi-mythical and by no means perfect society that had existed in Romania before the Soviet occupation and the carefully planned seizure of power by the PCR and its Soviet advisers. Of course, in Romanian prisons, these patriots had no access to books, newspapers, pen and paper, and little or no contact with the outside world; even so, hatred (of the depth noted by Ana Blandiana[17]) and thoughts of revenge, the prospect of a White Terror infinitely greater than the Red one, however justifiable on a personal basis, were hardly the best ingredients for a new, free, open, and civil society.

Sanda Golopenţia reminds us that at the time of gestation of *Sugestii* AG "s-a surprins reflectând la cele ce ar fi de făcut în eventualitatea unei schimbări de regim şi a 'debolşevizării' ţării, pe care le estima posibile în anul 2000" (was surprised to find himself reflecting on what steps should be taken in the eventuality of a change in regime and a process of 'debolshevization' of the country, which he estimated as possibly occurring in the year 2000, p. LXI). But no one, not even Anton Golopenţia, knew for certain when the collapse of Communism would occur. After the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution, wiser or more cautious spirits looked for change within the system, not a solution imposed by outside intervention. And yet AG had the courage to predict just such cataclysmic change. He may have been wrong about the inevitability of a new world war, and he could hardly

[16] We have recently learned that these so-called "bandits" have been given new appellations in Putin-controlled Russia: they are now apparently referred to as *pirates* and *werewolves*. Thus we have moved from the mythologies of the historical past into the mythologies of a Hollywood- fabricated coalescing of past, present, and indeterminate future.

[17] See her preface to Nicole Valéry-Grossu's *Binecuvântată fii, închisoare... o fostă deţinută politică din România vorbeşte,* Bucureşti, Editura Univers, 1997.

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have anticipated the advent of a Polish pope and a Soviet leader with a sufficient grasp of reality to draw the necessary conclusions about the cost of maintaining armed forces that could compete with American power, but his statistical knowledge of the resources that underlay American and Western capitalism allowed him to foresee the collapse of the Soviet system by the year 2000. The ultimate collapse may not have occurred exactly as he forecast, but his prognosis was close enough and, in comparison with the predictions at that time (1949) from other quarters, both West and East, remarkably prescient.

In these circumstances, a man who loved his country as deeply as did Golopenția might be willing to resume his role as a public servant, not because he supported the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and its eradication of the last vestiges of the peasant-bourgeois society in which he had grown up, but because the well-being of his compatriots needed his expertise and experience: "Sunt mai util României la masa mea de lucru decât în închisoare" (I'm more useful to Romania at my work table that I am in prison, p. 101). To perform vitally needed services was one thing, but the role of *observator social* he also apparently envisaged for himself was another. While the force of John Le Carré's axiom about the impossibility of *not* doing anything in a Communist regime seems appropriate, the role of the civil servant, British-style, as the great manipulator behind the scenes and the transmitting power from one government to another, does not. Or, at least, it is not likely that the PCR *aparatchiks* would have tolerated in their midst the presence of someone who knew more than they did. Moreover, for the die-hard anti-Communists, the *legionari* or P.N. activists scattered throughout the Romanian Gulag, such a position had little appeal, because it accepted, albeit temporarily, the status quo. Powerful forces were competing in the political arena, and Anton Golopenția, caught in a whirlwind of doctrinal conflict, sought a way out that would satisfy all the parties concerned. But for parties driven by ideological furor and bent on worldwide domination there could be no third way: "Either you are for us or you are against us." For the activists who were his former colleagues and friends, remembering his repeated refusals to join the Romanian Communist Party or one of its surrogates, Anton Golopenția, with his quiet determination not to make any kind of political commitment, simply postponed a decision that they saw as inevitable. Forgiveness for errors of judgment might be possible for someone who threw himself body and soul into the cause, but for someone who appeared to straddle the fence forgiveness was not forthcoming. Perhaps the truth is that, despite everything he brought himself to say in his prison declarations, he never could accept the compromises that would be necessary. Perhaps we should all reflect on the meaning and validity of such a decision: continuing reluctance to acquiesce may portend withdrawal and renouncement, but it may also reflect the impossibility of exercising that discernment required by Humanists such as Leon Battista Alberti and Pico della Mirandola of men who claimed the rights of citizenship in a free, open, and civil society. This is intellectual honesty at its best.

There have been other compilations of similar testimonies, principally the remarkable Colecția FID (Fapte, Idei, Documente) published by Editura Vremea, but these, for reasons of space or significance, fail to live up to the rigorous standards of completeness adopted by Sanda Golopenția in compiling her father's *Ultima carte*. Thus the massive *Documente ale procesului Lucrețiu Pătrăşcanu*[18] contain only 26 transcripts of declarations

[18] *Principiul bumerangului; Documente ale procesului Lucrețiu Pătrăşcanu*, Colecția FID (Fapte, Idei, Documente), Bucureşti, Editura Vremea, 1996.

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and three *procese verbale* signed by Pătrăşcanu himself during more than four years of imprisonment, together with a limited number of declarations made by fellow "co-conspirators" and relevant witnesses. By far and away the greater portion of the book is devoted to the actual trial records. While the statements recorded therein are of considerable value, they are often rehearsed and lack the immediacy and intimacy of Anton Golopenția's declarations, written for the most part in his own hand. Similarly, the declarations of those who appeared as the accused or witnesses in another show trial, that of Noica, Pillat, Steinhardt, Paleologu, Acterian, and others, are highly selective.[19] While they no doubt substantiate the principal positions adopted by the prosecution and the accused, they do not give the whole picture of the arrest, interrogation, and trial of these dissenting intellectuals that we find in Sanda Golopenția's compilation of her father's writings during his incarceration. It is, however, worth noting that Noica, Pillat and the others received heavy prison sentences for merely receiving and disseminating the literary works of Eliade and Cioran, Romanian expatriates known for their abhorrence of Communism as a creed and political system, whereas Golopenția's open contacts with these writers in Paris in 1946 seem to have paled in the eyes of his inquisitors when compared with those of presumed Communist traitors such as Pătrăşcanu. Anton Golopenția's *Ultima carte* thus affords us a rare glimpse into the totality of interrogation under duress, seen principally from the point of view of the detainee (the 37 declarations he made of his own volition), but also colored by insinuation, insistence, perhaps even dictation ("De ce crezi că vei fi condamnat la moarte?"/ Why do you think that you will be condemned to death?- *Ultima carte*, p. 141) by the *anchetatori* themselves. In their relentless oral questioning they no doubt sought to convince the victim of the correctness or at least the inevitability of their own position, and so lead him to a series of dangerous and highly revealing acts of self-destruction, but in the process they also became limited and involuntary co-authors of his testimony to the world at large.

Anton Golopenția's *Ultima carte* thus stands alone at this time. It is possible that similar testimonies may yet be located in the S.R.I. Archives and brought to light by an enterprising scholar. It is unlikely, however, that we shall confront testimony as compelling and forthright as this, because Anton Golopenția in his gradual and then sudden and decisive acceptance of the need to reveal all he knew, to correct of his own volition even the fine details of previous testimony, was–no doubt unwittingly, since for the most part he was kept in total isolation and had no contact with other prisoners, whose experience of questioning under duress might have been of great benefit to him–disobeying the golden rule of obdurate resistance under interrogation that Ion Ioanid and so many other recalcitrants vigorously promoted: to volunteer no information that was not already known, to deny all suggestions of complicity in acts against the state, and, above all, to avoid compromising the fate of others through one's own testimony. But then Golopenția at heart believed that, aside from what he called his infractions and whatever information he had about contacts with others, he had nothing to hide.

Of great interest to this study are the two letters that Anton Golopenția wrote in his cell, clearly in the hope that they would reach his wife and children. These show some of the intrinsically private concerns that Václav Havel displayed in his own prison letters, but we will refrain from commenting on them at this late stage. Rather, we hope that readers of

[19] *Prigoana; Documente ale procesului C. Noica, C. Pillat, N. Steinhardt, Al. Paleogu, A. Acterian, S. Al-George, Al.O. Teodoreanu etc.*, Colecția FID (Fapte, Idei, Documente), Bucureşti, Editura Vremea, 1996.

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Ultima carte will come upon them, as we did, as momentary relapses into sanity and tenderness by the author, reverting for an hour or so to his true role as husband and father, after the grim exchanges he had with himself and his interrogators in a vain attempt to repulse their sadistic and at times relentlessly meta-semantical probing. While we concede that other examples may emerge in the course of future investigation of the S.R.I. Archives, these are at the present time the only examples known to us of extended and highly personal letters written by a political prisoner to loved ones from prison in the Romanian Gulag. The fact that they were never delivered is a sad and painful reminder of aborted correspondence not only in Romania but also in other Soviet-block countries. These letters came into Sanda Golopenția's hands many years later (evidently for someone the spirit had finally moved) and she was able to cite them in a memorandum addressed to the Romanian National Assembly (Marea Adunare Națională) in 1996, in which she requested access to the files in the State Security Archives that dealt with her father's detention. We may surmise that it was possible for Anton Golopenția to write these letters only because his inquisitors had allowed him to use writing materials in his cell in order to pen declarations that were based on previously agreed versions of oral questioning. While all those detained as part of the Pătrăşcanu trial were presumably accorded similar facilities, at least up to 1952 (at which point *procese verbale* signed by both the detainee and his *anchetator* became standard practice), such a concession was a distinct rarity in the investigatory process (or indeed at any other time for political prisoners) in Communist Romania. March 1, 1950 marks a change in AG's attitude; not only does he now suggest the frustration he experienced at having to respond to some of his interrogators' barbed and sarcastic comments, but he also seizes the opportunity to compose the series of memoranda and letter/appeals that we have been discussing. Only an extraordinary series of coincidences allowed Sanda Golopenția to read what her father had intended only for her eyes, and the eyes of her mother and younger brother; we should be very grateful to her for her willingness to share these two letters with us as readers of her father's *Ultima carte*.

While Sanda Golopenția, perhaps wisely, prefers not to underline the fact that the health problems that led to her father's death were due in whole or in part to a *regim de exterminare* (a term found frequently in the accounts of Ioanid, Diaconescu and others, but also echoed here in the testimony of former *anchetatori*) and the rigor of interrogation, the likelihood, indeed the certainty, is that he was physically tortured, treated with the utmost severity, and did not receive the minimal care his physical condition warranted. The failure of the Ministry of the Interior to provide medical care is in fact confirmed by the statement of Nicolae Dumitrescu, who was charged with the overall administration of the individual interrogations: "realitatea a fost că nu s-a interesat nimeni de el" (the reality was that no one took any interest in him, *Ultima Carte*, p. 681). Many thousands of Romanian political prisoners suffered a similar death, but in most cases they were cared for by their cell mates, who often incurred the wrath of the guards in calling the attention of the prison administration to their condition. It would seem that Anton Golopenția was denied such care and consideration. It is to be hoped that at least at the Văcăreşti hospital prison there were those who eased his departure from this tormented world.

Other members of the so-called Lotul Pătrăşcanu (Lena Constante, for example) were subjected to vicious beatings and other forms of torture: *manejul* (the requirement that the prisoner adopt a fixed position for endless hours, often under the supervision of a vicious

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attack dog), hair and nails torn out, sleep deprivation (interrogation sessions sometimes lasted 70 hours or more without interruption), totally inadequate food and poor hygiene, and of course total isolation. Nicolae Betea, for instance, the man who had asked Anton Golopenția to pass on to Pătrășcanu the warning that he should flee the country, was savagely beaten on the feet, testicles, and head during the initial period of his arrest (*Ultima carte*, p. 612). His fate differed from that of Golopenția, however, in that when it was discovered that he had T.B. he was interned at the Central Hospital in Bucharest. We may surmise that this ferocious treatment of prisoners occurred at the insistence of the Soviet advisers and Gheorghiu-Dej, who were determined that Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu's guilt as an enemy of the PCR and the Soviet Union should be established one way or another. In his declaration to the Party Commission in 1967, Anghel Mircea claims that "Mi-am exprimat dezacordul cu aceste metode cu 'efect psihologic', mai ales când erau practicate într-o problemă ca aceasta, anchetată şi răsanchetată la toate nivelele" (I expressed my disagreement with these methods that had a "psychological effect," especially when they were employed to deal with an issue that came up at different stages of the interrogation process [he is referring to a statement he has attributed to Ioan Şoltuțiu a few lines earlier that "anchetarea şi bătaia în pielea goală a(u) un efect psihologic deosebit asupra arestatului -şi Şoltuțiu trebuie crezut" (the interrogation and beating of a detainee when stripped naked have a desirable psychological effect – and Şoltuțiu has to be believed]), p. 668). Mircea's disapproval of the use of torture, whose effects he had witnessed on the bodies of detainees in his charge, led to his being disciplined and threatened by his superiors. The testimony by former M.A.I. interrogators that Sanda Golopenția includes in her father's book is invaluable because it clearly shows that overall control of these investigations was exercised by Soviet advisers (Aleksandr Mihailovici and Pavel Tiganov)[20] and by Gheorghiu-Dej himself, and that the objective of the *anchetă* was to establish or confirm predetermined truth. When pressed to say whether the evidence against Pătrășcanu and his "co-conspirators" was a fabrication, Ioan Şoltuțiu, one of the chief culprits in this process, was forced to admit that "Totul a fost o minciună" (Everything was a lie, *Ultima carte*, p. 692).

In these circumstances, even if he had recovered from T.B., Anton Golopenția would surely have received a heavy prison sentence for his presumed role in the fabricated Pătrășcanu conspiracy. There is also little doubt that his writing of *Sugestii* and his role in census-taking and the proposed resettlement of Moldavians established in the Ukraine would have drawn the ire of the PCR hierarchy and their Soviet advisers and that he would have been condemned in his own right as an enemy of the Communist state and its Soviet protector. This is not to say that these hypothetical sentences would have been in any way deserved, but when the mentality of those in power is based on political dominance there

[20] In her introduction to *Ultima carte* (pp. XCII-XCIII), Sanda Golopenția explains at length the complicated mechanism whereby the Soviet authorities exercised control over the bureaux of the Security police and their investigative and judicial branches. In addition to the advisers Mihailovici and Tiganov, whom we have already named, there were the adjunct directors of the D.G.S.P. (Direcția Generală a Securității Statului) Alexandru Nikolski (alias Boris Grünberg) and Vladimir Mazaru, both officers of the NKGB with the rank of major-general. She also notes that "Al. Nikolski este cel care decide, în 1948, arestarea lui Elena Constante, N. Betea, A. Rațiu, iar ulterior G. Retegan....După toate probabilitățile, tot Al. Nikolski a dispus şi arestarea lui A.G."(Al. Nikolski is the one who, in 1948, decided to have Elena Constante, N. Betea, A. Rațiu, and at a later date G. Retegan, arrested… In all likelihood, Al. Nikolski was also the one who ordered the arrest of AG.).

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would be little room–contrary perhaps to Golopenția's initial expectations–for leniency and understanding. If he had been allowed to live, what might have been AG's further contributions to Romanian society? We believe that this is a matter that deserves some consideration. At the time of his death (at the age of 42), AG was at the height of his powers, fully capable not only of undertaking new projects but also of producing significant studies that synthesized his earlier findings as a researcher in the field and his theoretical models for examining Romanian society. With an undergraduate degree in Law (1930) from the University of Bucharest and a doctorate in Sociology from the University of Leipzig (1936), he went on to serve as director of (the) Institutul Social Român (1937-40) and as Acting Director of the I.C.S. (Institutul Central de Statistică) for two years before political pressures forced him to resign. In the war years, he was heavily involved in gathering information on the Moldavian population in Soviet territories beyond the Bug river. He published five studies and reference works dealing with Sociology and a further six in the domain of Statistics, Demographics and Geopolitics, and left unpublished at his death a vast body of writings in his professional fields, together with literary works, a journal, and a collection of essays (*Note germane*) compiled when he was studying in Germany (1933-36), at the very time Hitler was consolidating his power.[21] Thirty years after his death, H.H. Stahl, Dimitrie Gusti's closest collaborator, recalled him in these terms: "Golopenția era însă o sinteză a mai multora dintre noi: filosof tot atât cât Mircea Vulcanescu, erudit şi profesor tot atât cât Traian Herseni, investigator deopotrivă cu mine şi organizator tot atât de abil ca şi Octavian Neamțu" (Golopenția was however a synthesis of so many of us: a philosopher in the same way as Mircea Vulcanescu, a man of erudition and a teacher as was Traian Herseni, a researcher very much my own equal, and an organizer as versatile as Octavian Neamțu, *Amintiri şi gânduri*, 1981, pp. 291-92).[22]

Not only are these words of high praise but also of recognition long overdue. Anton Golopenția was perhaps the best documented representative of a group of intellectuals and dedicated public servants who, if they had lived and been allowed to function, would have constituted a well-informed reform group within the new Communist system and thus would have been in a position to alleviate some of the worst excesses in the traumatic years ahead. This is especially true of Nicolae Mărgineanu, another man of leftist leanings but no political aspirations, whose more than sixteen years of harsh detention deprived the fledgling, Communist-led republic of the services of one of the country's leading psychologists, with special expertise in the industrial sphere. On the other hand, AG's daughter, Sanda Golopenția, inevitably speaking from hindsight, takes pain to establish the extensive cultural and social relationships that intellectuals in Romania between the wars (and for some even

[21] In addition to *Ultima carte* and a definitive edition of Anton Golopenția's letters (in course of preparation), Sanda Golopenția has undertaken the task of editing her father's *Opere complete* for Editura Enciclopedică, of which vol. I (*Sociologie*) appeared in 2002, vol. II (*Statistică. Demografie şi Geopolitică*) in 2000, while vol. III (*Literatură, Artă, Filosofie*) is still pending.

[22] Cited in an article by Constantin Schifirneț, "Anton Golopenția–Sociolog reformator," published in an insert dedicated to Anton Golopenția of "Origini /Romanian Roots", vol. VII, no. 1-2 (67 & 68), January-February 2003. Those readers who may know little about Golopenția's life, background, and accomplishments will find much that is surprising and helpful in this eight-page insert. The picture that emerges is not that of the tormented individual we have met in *Ultima carte*, but of a man with varied pursuits, totally dedicated to his profession, and a warm, engaging human being, who enjoyed close and enduring friendships, fond memories of his childhood in the Banat, of foreign excursions, of his days as a student, and a strong desire to use his knowledge and experience as a sociologist to help others, especially the young people of his native country.

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during and immediately after WWII) enjoyed with each other, whether they were politically and ideologically on the right or the left. As a case in point we have Anton Golopenția's contacts with Eliade, Cioran, and other exiles while he was attending the Paris Peace Conference in 1946, contacts, however understandable in view of past friendships, which were undoubtedly held against him by his ideologically motivated inquisitors. Friendships, contacts, exchanges of mutual esteem that bring into sharp relief--here we should remember the fulminations of Ioanid and others, but also the guarded appreciation of Mihalcea, against Sadoveanu, Vianu, and George Călinescu – the apparent abandonment of their fellow men and women by those members of the educated elite who sought, for whatever reason, to accommodate themselves to the policies of the new Communist regime.

In more general terms, *Ultima carte* clearly establishes, as we have already seen from the testimonies of former *anchetatori* to the PCR Commission of 1967, that the Soviet advisers played an active, even dominant role not only in the reinvigorated *anchetă* of 1952 that ultimately led to the trial and conviction of Lucrețiu Pătrăşcanu and his co-defendants, but also in the earlier years (1950-51) of the investigation. Thus, in response to two questions by tov. Gh. Stoica, the former *anchetator*, Ioan Şoltuțiu, denied the existence of a Pătrăşcanu conspiracy, or that the defendants constituted "un grup de spioni, de trădători ai țării, de duşmani ai partidului" (a group of spies, of traitors of the country, of enemies of the party, *Ultima carte*, p.692). As to why the trial took place, Şoltuțiu takes refuge in the words of Pătrăşcanu: "Dumneata eşti o păpuşă. Ştiu cine stă în spatele dumitale" (You are a puppet. I know who stands behind you, *Ultima carte*, p. 689). The implication is that this is Gheorghiu-Dej, who appointed Şoltuțiu in the first place and to whom he transmitted his orders via his underlings. There is also confirmation in the marginal notes a number of investigators found scrawled on the internal M.A.I. reports, evidently in Dej's own handwriting. Şoltuțiu, moreover, is careful to point out that he merely obeyed orders, whether these came from the Soviet advisers or from Drăghici at the Ministry of Interior: "Nu am fost decât un simplu executant" (I was merely the one who executed the orders of others, *Ultima carte*, p. 693). A self-justification first enunciated at Nuremberg, which later became commonplace in the Bosnian trial proceedings at the Hague. It is hard to imagine more damning evidence, evidence that directly implicates Gheorghiu-Dej and those Soviet counsellors who represented the interests of the Soviet government, as well as a whole host of members of the *nomenclatura*, for whom Şoltuțiu's characterization of justice served as a ready excuse for the part they played in inflicting misery and death on their fellow countrymen–the crime of fratricide that Mărgineanu insists on leveling.

Lucrețiu Pătrăşcanu remains a controversial, and for some odious, figure, but it may be argued that if he had achieved a position of enduring power in the party hierarchy the history of Communist Romania might have been less catastrophic, if only because as an intellectual of some standing he was capable of seeing more than one side of an issue. Whether he would have emerged as a partisan of Communism with a human face is debatable; there is little in his past, other than his avowal of nationalism, that suggests he would have assumed such a role. What applies in this respect to him would also apply to Antonio Gramsci, but it is futile, and most historians would argue, illogical and inadmissible, to second guess history. What is absolutely clear, however, is that Pătrăşcanu, himself caught in an *ingranaggio*, partly of his own making, dragged down into the mire many worthy men and women. Anton Golopenția suffered the same, indeed a worse, fate,

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but he was emphatically not one of the Communist leader's own admirers and followers. While he provided Pătrăşcanu with statistical information, as he was duty bound to do, he makes it clear that he opposed the surrender of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union and the forced collectivization of peasant holdings, and that he considered many of Pătrăşcanu's decisions as Minister of Justice to have been intemperate and unwise. There may be some who would question AG's limited cooperation in the *coup d'état* of August 23, 1944, but there can be little doubt about his patriotism, his deep anxieties about the future of his country, and his strong desire to serve it to the best of his ability.

Testimonianza dall' interno dell' "inchiesta": Il calvario di Anton Golopenția

50 anni dopo la morte in prigione di Anton Golopenția, sua figlia, Sanda Golopenția, pubblicò (*Ultima carte,* Bucureşti: Ed. Enciclopedică, 2001) le 184 dichiarazioni, memoranda, e lettere che costituiscono la sua testimonianza carceraria. Nella dichiarazione del 1-V-1950 A.G. aveva rivelato l'esistenza di *Sugestii*, un documento in cui prevedeva la caduta del comunismo nell'anno 2000 e la purificazione della gerarchia del partito comunista, affirmazioni "eretici" per gli interrogatori. Questo studio mette in rilievo la lunga lettera del 17/18-V-50 scritta a Miron Constantinescu nella speranza che questi l'avrebbe aiutato a scappare da una situazione tragica La testimonianza di A.G. è l'unica paragonabile alle lettere di detenuti italiani come Gramsci.

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