THE IMAGE OF COMMUNISM REFLECTED IN THE ARCHIVES OF A FEW ORTHODOX PARISHES OF BUCHAREST

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Abstract: The Archives of the Orthodox parishes are a source not used yet because of the disinterest manifested by clergy on one hand, and because of the chronological gaps most of them have on the other hand, so that it is very difficult to make a clear cut history of the parish life. Deposited in improper conditions most times, the parish documents were lost or damaged, especially the old ones, so that today they can be still used only with great difficulty. The most interesting documents of these archives are the reports drafted by the parish councils where part of the faithful participated, namely those elected by the parochial Assembly and by the servant priests. Most times they render the changes occurred in the life of the parish, the decisions taken at certain times in regard to the assets of the church, the renovations and changes the places of worship and their outbuildings passed through, buildings that used to belong to them or are still in their possession. There is very few information about the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the communist state in these archives, because the priests avoided noting down their own opinions about the political regime not to be accused of hostile attitude towards the "communist order". Yet, some precious information can be gathered from the parish documents which help us learn how a series of decisions of the communist state influenced the religious life of the Orthodox communities. Because some of the archives disappeared in the rush of the demolishment during the last years of communism some information was lost which could have been useful today.
I focused in my study on the archives of a few Orthodox parishes threatened by the urban changes that seriously changed the image of Bucharest. Most of the historical data are provided just from the period of these urban changes that focused on the demolishment of a few churches or outbuildings that belonged to them. Because the number of these churches is rather large and because I have already made some research on some of them, I focused on a few archives still in the possession of the churches that used to be threatened with demolishment, but which the political changes occurred two decades and a half ago saved. I succeeded in examining the archives of the parishes of Delea Noua – Calisit, "Hagiu" – Hala Traian, Calarasi Park and Mihai Bravu. The data found in these archives are scarce, but they help us form an image of the way in which the decisions of the communist state changed the life of the Orthodox priests and faithful.

Keywords: churches, demolishment, priests, communism, persecution

Communism unfolded not only a large programme of elimination of the intellectual elite, but also a project of remodelling the localities according to plans that promoted the construction of buildings which characterised the Romanian town-planning during the last communist decade. The urbanism of Bucharest was deeply changed during the communist years when a new Civic Centre was raised dominated by the People's House and by the great thoroughfares bordered by blocks of flats that imitated the Asian communist architecture. Unirea Boulevard is one of the most important boulevards of the capital city and most crowded thoroughfares of the city, namely the longitudinal axis of the new Civic Centre project launched at the initiative of the communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and begun after

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the earthquake of 1977, under the pretext of reconstructing and repairing the damages caused by the earthquake in Bucharest. The communist regime used the project of the new Civic Centre to dissipate the influences that the old historical centre of Bucharest exerted over the city's environment. Unirea Boulevard – "Victory of Socialism" links Alba Iulia Square and the Constitution Square, the most crowded area of Bucharest. Inspired by the architecture that characterised the communist regimes of China and North Korea (which Nicolae Ceausescu visited in 1970), the construction of the new Civic Centre was inaugurated in 1984, in the presence of the party and state leadership. Thus, Calea Calarasilor and "Victory of Socialism" boulevards passed through a series of Orthodox parishes most times made up of private dwelling places, which they demolished to make room to the dull blocks of flats raised during the last years of communism. Tens of churches of Bucharest and a large number of beautiful houses that gave the great city a special aspect and beauty fell in the way of the bulldozers.[1] Vacaresti Monastery, one of the most beautiful and biggest church constructions of our country was destroyed.[2] Mihai Voda Monastery did not escape the bulldozers close to the People's House, the church hidden today behind the blocks of flats having been saved through shifting.[3] In fact, hiding the churches behind the new blocks of flats has become an ordinary method, lest the communist authorities see them in case of field inspections.

A few churches situated between Decebal Boulevard and Calea Mosilor St which were certainly to be removed escaped demolition due to the falling of communism. Their archives still keep documents that seem to mention their future demolition. One of them is Delea Noua church remained in the middle of Calea Calarasi St after the parish house and Calist old people's home close to it were demolished. There are two reports in the archives of "Hagiu" parish drafted in November 1989 presenting the request of the communist authorities that the parish should cede the plot of land around the church for expropriation where a block of flats should have been built. Some of the members of the parish council and priest Gheorghe Dragulin, who had been in the communist prisons, tried a weak opposition. Calarasi Park Parish was set up by priest Constantin Sarbu persecuted by the communist regime which sentenced him to over eight years of imprisonment. The last of the church archives examined was that of Mihai Bravu parish of which church was raised during the communist period. On the occasion of the festivities for the canonisation of the Romanian saints, a unique religious gesture in the European communist space, the communist authorities took the delegations of foreign guests to visit Mihai Bravu church which was being built, to show them the freedom that the political regime of Romanian gave to the Orthodox Church and to her servant priests.

In 1981, Delea Noua church, the parish house and the belfry affected by the earthquake of 1977 were consolidated through the financial and material efforts of the faithful. The consolidation effort was a very serious one because the constructions dating from the end of the 19th century had suffered big damages. Unfortunately, soon afterwards the communist authorities started an extensive programme designed to demolish the houses around this church, with the church to be removed in the end. The parish council noted on 30 June 1987: *"... 700 houses within the parish were demolished and other ones will follow and as we do not know what will be built instead of the houses demolished, the parish is seriously financially affected, so that the Parish Council proposes to intervene to the Holy Archdiocese*

[1] See Lidia Anania, Cecilia Luminea, Livia Melinte, Ana-Nina Prosan, Lucia Stoica, Neculai Ionescu-Ghinea, *Biserici osândite de Ceauşescu, 1977 – 1989*, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995.
[2] See Octavian-Dumitru Marinescu, *Mănăstirea Văcăreşti din Bucureşti, de la origini până astăzi*, Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2012; Vezi Gheorghe Leahu, *Distrugerea mănăstirii Văcăreşti*, Bucharest, 1996.
[3] See Claudia Tita-Mircea, *Biserica Mănăstirii Mihai Vodă; monumentele Bucureştiului istoric*, ASA Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006; See Cristea Letiţia Mirela, *Relaţiile Tării Româneşti cu Muntele Athos în secolele XVII-XIX. Cazul Mănăstirii Mihai Vodă*, (teză de doctorat), Bucharest, 2012.

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to restructure the salaries scheme with one temporary priest position till the re-establishment of the parish with a singer job".[4] The communist authorities decided to demolish the parish house and the old people's home of the church: *"... one of these days, in the afternoon, the representatives of the local state authorities visited the parish house of the church situated in Delea Noua St and the former old people's home asking for data on the number of persons who were living in the building and the purpose of the rooms. This building hosts the parish chancellery where there is the library with the books included in the inventory, as well as precious furniture, the paintings of the founder of this church, also very precious, as well as the belfry with two bells which are common part of the respective building. Given this state of things, and not to be taken by surprise, we kindly ask you – in case you have information on the future state of the church and of the buildings belonging to it – to let us know in due time where to deposit the archives and the other assets included in the inventory"*.[5]

In 1987, in winter, the buildings around the church were demolished only the place of worship escaping the scourge, as it was allowed to temporary operate till its future demolition. The report of 7 December 1987, drafted by the parochial council presents the dramatic situation: *"The parish house made up of ground floor and one floor including 4 flats, the parish chancellery, parish library, belfry situated in the middle of the parish house, as well as the former Calist old people's home were demolished, so that only the holy church remained surrounded by debris.*

I. C. R. A. L. department, district 2, recuperated all the beams resulted after the demolition both of the parish house, the wood of the belfry, and of Calist old people's home, because it was good wood useful for construction.

The parish recuperated the metallic part of the fence made of double wire and the majority of the pillars deposited in the church. The two bells are also deposited in the church. The rest of the inventory materials were recuperated and laid in the church". The state of things will be communicated to the Holy Archdiocese. Following the information provided by the parish priest, the parish council agrees to appeal to I. C. R. A. L. (Enterprise for Constructions, Repairs and Locative Administration) department to make an estimating price for providing the church with water and gas".[6] As a result of the address of the People's Council of Bucharest city, D. G. D. L. department, no 16323 of 14 January 1988, registered at the Holy Archdiocese of Bucharest under no 530/1988, by which the approval of the parish council was asked for demolishing a part of the parish buildings situated in Delea Noua St, and ceding the surrounding plot of land, the council members approved it.[7] Very interesting is the fact that the approval of the parish council was asked after the buildings had already been demolished. There were tenants in the parish buildings who left without paying their debts to the parish.

The situation of the church after demolition has become dramatic, the parish council asking the Archdiocese of Bucharest to appeal to the aid of some other parishes, taking into account the fact the largest part of the parish had been demolished.[8] The parish of Saint Elijah-Pipera came to its aid providing it with an amount of 3000 lei. The communist authorities asked the Archdiocese of Bucharest that the parish council of Delea Noua church should approve the demolition of the building it owned in 154 Labirint St, district 3, Bucharest. It is very interesting that the approval was asked in July, after the church house in Labirint St had been demolished in January 1988.[9] The parish council hoped that the state

[4] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 30 June 1987.
[5] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 9 Sept. 1987.
[6] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 7 Dec. 1987.
[7] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 25 Jan. 1988.
[8] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 30 Dec. 1987.
[9] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, File no. 8/1989.

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authorities would compensate the parish with the value of the building.[10] On 5 October 1988, the parish council thought it was high time to take steps for re-constructing the church belfry[11] and asked the authorities to specify what plot of land would remain in the possession of the church in order to know where to situate it.[12]

The report of 15 April 1989 shows us that the church was reconnected to the gas system and temporary provided with electricity and water till the final works were finished. A few faithful have also succeeded in setting a temporary fence around the church.[13]

According to an official report, Delea Noua parish was announced that I. C. R. A. L. Foisor department estimated the value of the compensation for the demolition of the church buildings to 80.000 lei. This is why in August 1989, the parish council asked the Archdiocese of Bucharest to entitle it to get the rights of compensation. The parish priest has even tried to get one of the flats built around the church to use it as depot for the parish archives: *"I applied to the City Hall authorities so that the church should come into the possession of an apartment where to deposit the inventory heaped up in the church together with the five years old bells"*.[14] The parish seems to have got only the amount of 100.000 lei used only to make the fence that still surrounds the church today.

Very suggestive at the parish level is a report preserved at Delea Noua parish which renders the missionary activity of an 80 years old priest and the difficulties he was faced with only two years after the fall of communism. The report dated 11 June 1992, which priest Teodor Stoica addressed to the deanery reads the following: *"From a religious point of view I celebrate the Divine Liturgy every Sunday and at feast times. I deliver two speeches every Sunday. After reading the Holy Gospel I briefly refer to the content of the fragment read and then I develop the theme at the right time. I celebrate the Divine Liturgy for the dead every Sunday and the remember services as well. Every Friday, at 18.00 hours I celebrate the akathistos service followed by catechisations, when I debate various themes, such as those related to the Church, what it is and what it means, as well as to the Resurrection of the Lord, the Ecumenical Council, the division of the Church and the crumbling of the Western Church into Calvinism and many sects, life of Saint Paul the Apostle, his journeys and activity*.

Cultural. I distributed 25 Bibles, 30 copies of the Little Bible, special books for school children and books of prayers.

Economic. I retired the cleaning woman of the church because I had no funds for paying her, but she keeps on working with no salary".[15] I personally got my salary till March 1992, because we engaged to execute the fence surrounding the church, which is situated now in a field, where it is very hard for those who come to this church to reach it; we mention that although 90% of the parish was demolished and the blocks of flats around us are not finished and inhibited, we can declare that the attendance is exceptional. Taking into account the compensation for demolition – 124.000 lei, the surplus stock of the year 1991, we won 809.663 lei and spent 657.000 lei. We made progress with the construction of the fence, using 450.000 lei out of 1.200.000 lei. If we can cover its value we hope to finish the fence till the end of the month, and then we shall try to set on improvised scaffolding the bells that have been kept in the church for five years. We committed ourselves to finish these works although we lack the necessary funds in order to try to improve the situation of the place of worship, embarrassing for us, where it is hard to come walking in mud and wholes. Because of the high

[10] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 11 June 1988.
[11] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 5 Oct. 1988.
[12] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 3 Jan. 1989.
[13] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, Register of Official Reports, 1977-1989, official report of 15 April 1988.
[14] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish – Report of 11 June 1992, f. 1, v.
[15] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish – Report of 11 June 1992, f. 1, f.

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price of the materials we have to appeal to subscriptions and collections to end the work begun".[16]

The demolition has also affected the geographic structure of the parishes. The priests lost the old landmarks that showed the boundaries between parishes. This is why conflicts between the priests of the adjacent parishes came up many times. Rev Teodor Stoica from Delea Noua church related such a situation: *"It is very hard for us because the parish bodies are no longer complete, many of them having been moved to other parishes so that it is difficult to gather them together. The greatest hardships come from the adjacent parishes of Calarasi Park and Mihai Bravu. Calarasi Parish seized 5 blocks of flats, each of them with two stairways, because three of these blocks of flats are called Apostol Margarit after a small street included in the big one. Rev Popescu H. Ioan, from Mihai Bravu church shamelessly seized one third of the blocks built in the territory of Delea Noua parish, close to the boundary with Mihai Bravu parish. It was hard for us to find the papers of the file for the building license".*[17]

The communist authorities have also pursued a permanent policy restricting the human rights, especially the journey abroad. In 1985, father Teodor tried to go to his daughter settled in Germany. He applied to the Department for Passports Release, which refused him. Nevertheless, he insisted with the following appeal: *"My daughter, of Romanian origin, with German citizenship, who lives in Hamburg, Federal Republic of Germany, who has been, in fact, several times in the country, asks me to go to the Federal Republic of Germany on a visit, possibly to have a surgery for coxal -femoral arthrosis.*

I filled in the form for a passport release in September 1985, but I was informed through address no 94867/1985 that it was not approved. This year I have also submitted an application for a passport, but I received a negative answer too. I am 75 years old. From 1944 – 1947 I represented the country and Church in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, I was young and I came back to the country where I was born, where I have my brothers and parents, so that I do not understand why I am refused to make this journey. Having briefly informed you of the things mentioned above, and thinking it should be a mistake, I kindly ask you to think twice over this state of things and give me a passport to travel to the Federal Republic of Germany in the months of June - August this year, when I have my holiday".[18] Priest Teodor has not gone to Germany, but his daughter came to Romania after the fall of communism.

Not far from Delea Noua church it is "Hagiu" church which passed through a period of renovation and consolidation together with the other buildings it owns, as a result of the earthquake of 1977. The church was re-consecrated in 1980. The efforts made for consolidating the church were coordinated by priest Vasile Diaconescu. The remarkable priest wrote about his service: *"Priesthood was considered as a spiritual wedding, by which the priests becomes the bridegroom of the parish entrusted to him and he is committed to serve the Church with love able of sacrifice. He is the spiritual father who gives birth to his sons in the bath of baptism, feeds him with the divine truth and grace and guides them on the way of salvation. As servant of God and as intercessor between Him and people, as preacher of the Gospel, which is the word and will of God and as shepherd of souls, as apostle and as father of all people, as the light of the world and as salt of the earth, the priest must be adorned with all virtues which make the beauty of Christianity and especially of priesthood. I do not know if I succeeded in accomplishing this ideal of priesthood, but I tried to serve God and the*

[16] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish – Report of 11 June 1992, f. 1, f.
[17] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish – Report of 11 June 1992, f. 1, v.
[18] Archives of Delea Nouă Parish, File of correspondence/1985; Claudiu Cotan, *Preotul Teodor Stoica, un slujitor pentru românii din sudul Dunării*, in Simpozionul „Mehedinţi, istorie, cultură şi spiritualitate", Universitaria Publishing House, Didahia Severin Publishing House, Drobeta Turnu Severin, 2012, p. 359.

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people and especially my parishioners with all my love and devotion both at the Holy Altar as celebrant and at the pulpit, as preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord".[19]

Unfortunately, the decisions of the communist authorities would affect "Hagiu" church too, which was situated close to the blocks of flats that were being built in Calea Calarasi St. The archives of "Hagiu" parish keeps a report dated November 1989 which shows us how the communist authorities were acting to get various approvals for demolition and expropriation from the church authorities: *"... the following agenda was discussed" 1. Letter no 9816 of 31 October 1989 of the General Department for developing the construction of social-cultural dwelling places and locative administration, and 2, letter no 13079 of 13 November 1989 of the Holy Archdiocese of Bucharest, Economical Department ... The parish priest reads the letter by which D. G. D. A. L. informs the parish that the investment plan of the C. P. M. B (House of Pensions of Bucharest) for 1990 stipulates to build blocks of flats in the area of Calea Calarasi St – zone III, decommissioning a surface of 1245 m^2 and surroundings of 88 m* (that belonged to the parish) *and asks for the written agreement of the parish to be included in the decree project"*. The Archdiocese too asked the same documents on behalf of the communist authorities, but asking that the block of flats that was to be built to be no closer than seven metres, and the enclosure of the church courtyard to be remade. It is very interesting that a series of counsellors explained that it was not up to them to agree with such a request, and father Gheorghe Dragulin, who had been in the communist prisons from 1952 – 1954, asked that the issue should be presented to the parish assembly on Sunday, 26 November 1989. Father Dragulin had been in the communist prisons, but he was still strong enough to oppose the abusive decisions taken by communists. The parish assembly approved the decision of the Council, so that "Hagiu" parish was to cede the plot of land requested.[20] The communist authorities wanted to open a new group of blocks of flats that was to be parallel with that situated in Calea Calarasilor St.

The church of Calarasi Park dedicated to Saints Emperors Constantine and Helen is situated in Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi Square –Muncii Square, at the crossroads of streets Mihai Bravu with Basarabia Boulevard and Calea Calarasi St, important boulevards bordered by hundreds of blocks of flats. The church is still one of the biggest of Bucharest, having been raised in the area that used to be Calarasi Park. The parish was set up in 1936, and the first place of worship was an underground of Queen Elisabeth Settlement – Children's Hospital headed during the war by one of the greatest physicians of our country, Victor Gomoiu. In the small chapel organised by priest Constantin V. Sarbu (1905 – 1975),[21] with the help of doctor Victor Gomoiu, those who entered the hospital and the poor workers of the district[22] could find their peace of mind. In order to get the plot of land where the slender church was raised and which we easily notice in the area, Priest Sarbu waged a true battle against the City Hall and a series of entrepreneurs who wanted to raise blocks of flats there. The church was built due to the endeavours and work of a great servant of the Orthodox altars, father Constantin Sarbu, one of the martyr priests of the communist period, and to the generosity of marshal Ion Antonescu, its main founder. The efforts of the two founders were completed by the contribution of certain donors and by the aids received from the parishioners of Bariera Vergului district. The document laid at the foundation of the church reads: *"This holy place of*

[19] Archives of „Hagiu" Parish – Register of the servant priests.
[20] Archives of „Hagiu" Parish, File of correspondence – official reports 1989, official report of 23 November 1989.
[21] Gheorghe Vasilescu, „Sârbu, Constantin", in *Martiri pentru Hristos, din România, în perioada regimului comunist*, Institutul Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, pp. 643-658.
[22] Gheorghe Vasilescu, „Sârbu, Constantin", in *Martiri pentru Hristos, din România, în perioada regimului comunist*, pp. 656-658.

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worship begun in times of great hardship, but also of great national pride for our country is built as an everlasting proof of the holy covenant that our Church has always had with our nation and country. Marshal Ion Antonescu of Romania, 28 June 1943". Rev. Constantin Sarbu attended the university courses of the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest and of the Conservatoire of Music, having always been animated by the missionary spirit of the priestly service. In order to maintain himself he worked both at the time when he was a pupil at the seminary and when he was a student, because he came from a poor family. After marriage he moved to Husi, where bishop Nifon Criveanu ordained him priest and assigned him head of the School of singers. In 1938 he transferred himself to Bucharest, to the parish of Calarasi Park which had no church, but where he succeeded to build a true cathedral. The parish was made up especially of poor houses dwelled in by workers.[23] Films were presented in the underground of the church and concerts were given by one of the most important choruses of Bucharest. The church chorus was conducted by a great musician for a time, Gheorghe Bazavan, arrested by communists in 1949.

Having become a widower in 1941, father Constantin Sarbu succeeded in organising one of the most active parishes of Bucharest, which fact did not escape the vigilance of the communist authorities. The state of things worsened after a special event. On 1 June 1946, the rumour spread that the Mother of God or a cross would have appeared at one of the windows of the church. A spiritual euphoria spread as lightening all over the parish. The event has also gotten a political significance because the same day, at Jilava, marshal Ion Antonescu, the founder of the church, and those of his group, were executed by the order of the communists.

Although not painted, in 1949 the church was consecrated by metropolitan Nifon Craioveanul, a hierarch persecuted by the communist regime who wanted him eliminated. The hierarchs of Bucharest must have avoided participating in such an event given the fact that the church remembered Ion Antonescu, enemy of the people, and his wife, as main founders. The painting was executed from 1962 – 1964, by care of patriarch Justinian and of priest Constantin Nichita, and the church was re-consecrated on 3 October 1976. In 1988, the communist authorities tried to demolish the church, justifying that it was founded by a war criminal, the same as they were planning to remove Delea Noua church too. The fall of communism saved them both.

Father Constantin Sarbu did not take into account the interdictions imposed by the communist regime to the clergy of Bucharest, and continued to preach courageously Christ to the thousands of faithful who were coming into the church he and marshal Ion Antonescu raised. At the beginning of 1954, the security forces arrested him, just like a reply to his pastoral activity, accusing him of anti-communist activity, at the end of the year having been sentenced to eight years and three months of imprisonment for having plotted against the social order. On 10 December 1954, the father's appeal was rejected. During the eight years of imprisonment father Constantin Sarbu passed almost through all the communist prisons: Jilava (1954 – 1955), Dej (1955), Poarta Alba (1955-1956), Salcia (1959), Gherla (1956-1962) and Aiud.[24]

Released in December 1961, he was sent with forced domicile to Viisoara village, in Baragan field, where he remained for two years. In February 1964, when the political prisoners were released, father Sarbu came back to Bucharest, but has always been followed

[23] Gheorghe Parusi, *Bariera Vergului sau viaţa unui băiat de Bucureşti*, Compania Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010, p. 87.

[24] Gheorghe Vasilescu, „Sârbu, Constantin", in *Martiri pentru Hristos, din România, în perioada regimului comunist*, p. 658.

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by the agents of the security forces. He started serving in a small ruined church in Sapientei St, not far from the future People's House. Patriarch Justinian urged him to serve in the humble church fully aware that father Sarbu would turn the humble place of worship into a cathedral of spirituality. A large number of faithful came to the little church under his nice guidance, to the horror of the communist authorities who decided at last to eliminate him. Father Sarbu was almost invited by the people of the Security forces to choose how to die, namely in the hospital, or commit suicide. Suicide was impossible for a servant of the altar. Arrested again, father Sarbu was hospitalised for a surgery, because he was suffering from duodenal ulcer. At the middle of October 1975, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the last time, and on 23 October father Sarbu died after a banal surgery at Elias Hospital, but not without having been confessed and communicated by father Ilarion Argatu from Cernica Monastery, another great father confessor followed by the Security. Unfortunately, the archives of Calarasi Park church have not been preserved, having been burned in 1988, as the communists wanted to wipe away any traces of the service of father Constantin Sarbu in this church.

In 1955, the Romanian Orthodox Church canonised some of the best known Romanian saints. The delegations of some sister Orthodox Churches attended the festivities organised with the involvement of the communist authorities. On this occasion, the foreign delegations were invited to visit a series of monasteries and churches to see the freedom the Orthodox Church and her servants enjoyed in our country. Mihai Bravu Parish was visited now, of which church was being built. The communist authorities sustained in front of the foreign guests that churches were built and the freedom of conscience was observed under the communist regime. The delegation who visited the church wrote a few lines in the book of honour of the parish.

Having studied the various aspects of some of the churches of Bucharest during the communist regime we can affirm that if this totalitarian regime had resisted several years more in Romania, most of the churches of Bucharest which we see today would have no longer existed, because the communist bulldozers would have erased any historical proof of their existence.

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