

**The Romanian-Yugoslav Relations between the Balkan Cooperation
and the Informational War.**

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Abstract

The Romanian-Yugoslav relations represent a study case as a result of the alternation between cooperation and mutual mistrust, the first coordinate being dictated by the historically close relations, while the second one came as a consequence of the doctrine of besieged city promoted by the communist regime. Despite the informational war that two regimes were fighting alike internally and internationally, the cooperation represents the dominant component, with a strong activity behind the public's eye, meaning the common initiatives in intelligence, security, and defense as well as strategic planning. Both

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representing the discordant actors of the Soviet sphere of influence, their cooperation has been long-termed dictated by the common threat of being politically aligned and later integrated into a unitary Balkan hybrid political project under Soviet rule.

The isolation of the regime from Belgrade came as a result of the ideological split between Joseph Visarionovici Stalin and Josip Broz Tito, based on the fact that Belgrade's socialist-building paradigm deviated from the general lines promoted by Moscow, imprinted in Bucharest some certain circumspection over the cooperation with the western neighbor during the first decade of communism.

Having Romania as one of the most cooperative vassals of the Soviet Union until the early 1960s, the dichotomy between the Romanian and the Yugoslav communism was perhaps obvious as an internationally recognized border, separating the energies of Yugoslav reformism from the conservatism of the Romanian dogma. As a result, considering the stage of dogmatic communism within the socialist camp, the interactions between a satellite and a non-aligned country were closely monitored by the USSR, fearing the contagion with *Titoism* that was largely claimed to act damagingly against communist construction.

The orientation change within the Romanian foreign policy occurred only six years after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Romania starting with May 1958, being marked by the *Declaration of the Romanian Workers' Party* of April 1964, by which the regime led Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej marked a perceptible detachment from Kremlin's directives. One year before, in November 1963, the Romanian and Yugoslav representatives signed the *Agreement for the Joint Construction of the Hydro-power and Navigation System from the Iron Gates*, the *Joint*

Communiqué of September 1964¹ announcing the debut of the works, which were supposed to be finalized on 17 May 1972.² Two years later, the *Letter of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party* of February 25th, 1966, addressed to the Union of Yugoslav Communists targeted the “strengthening of the friendship between Romania and Yugoslavia”.³

The Yugoslav foreign policy consisted of maintaining its traditional lines, with Tito's rule over the non-alignment movement being confirmed with the organization of the non-committed countries conferences. The first high-level meeting took place at Belgrade in September 1961, when the *Statement of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Countries* ⁴ was signed, followed by the second conference – held at Cairo during October 1964 – the *International Peace and Cooperation Program*,⁵ being adopted by the end of the reunion. On this occasion, it was debated the idea that socialism could be seen as a historical process, not as a dogma, given the ever deeper rupture between the conservatism still present in Moscow's discourse and the self-control, namely the *controlled liberalization measures*,⁶ promoted by the leadership from Belgrade.

The generational exchange that happened in Bucharest after Dej's death with the election of Nicolae Ceaușescu as General-Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, marked the strengthening of the relation between Romania and

¹ Nicolae Ciachir, Panait Gălățeanu, *Republica Socialistă Federativă Iugoslavia*, Bucharest, Romanian, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1969, p. 289.

² ****National Archives of Romania, The Fund of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party – The Foreign Affairs Section, file 4/1972, p. 73; it will continue to be quoted as NAR.

³ ***NAR, file 10i, p. 3.

⁴ Nicolae Ciachir, Panait Gălățeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Ion Bucur, *The Book of Repression*, Bucharest, IRRD Publishing House, 2016, p. 37.

Yugoslavia, mentioning in this way the tendency of the new Romanian leader of detaching in an exponentially greater extent compared to that of his predecessor. At the same time, Belgrade's support for Bucharest had become more and more consistent, especially after Ceausescu's distancing from the *Warsaw Treaty* and from the *Council for Mutual Economic Assistance*, mentioning in this respect a "synchronized action with the West for weakening the cohesion of the socialist bloc".⁷ The first measure, in this case, was the signing of *The Long-Term Trade Agreement between Romania and Yugoslavia 1966-1970* in 1966,⁸ that succeeded *The General Trade and Payments Agreement* ratified in 1956.

The signals transmitted by Romania's counterpart to the Yugoslav side showed reciprocity in the situation of "active measures of political and economic isolation of the nationalist-deviant rebel from Bucharest".⁹ In the context of a hostile climate created by the Kremlin and the USSR satellites, the need for a special understanding with Tito had become one of the most viable scenarios since "the international dimension and leadership in the movement of unaligned countries were recognized and respected in the whole world, making a good recommendation for the new leader from Bucharest".¹⁰ The inherent effect was to include Romania alongside with Albania, Yugoslavia, and China in the category of *deviated states* since the late 1960s, especially as Romania did not support the Soviet Union with any military facilities during KGB's far-reaching operations.

⁷ Constantin Hlihor, *România și șocurile geopolitice ale Războiului Rece*, Bucharest, IRRD Publishing House, 2016, p. 172.

⁸ Nicolae Ciachir, Panait Gălățeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

⁹ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogojan, *Istorie, geopolitică și spionaj în Balcanii de Vest: originile, evoluția și activitatea structurilor secrete de informații în spațiul etnico-geografic al slavilor meridionali: Iugoslavia versus România în războiul din umbră*, Baia Mare, Poema Publishing House, 2009, p. 262.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 263-246.

Unlike Romania, Yugoslavia had shown more openness to the military dialogue with Moscow, mentioning in this regard the *Convention for the Deployment of the MIG Fleet Missions Operating in the Mediterranean*. The arguments behind this counterbalance position adopted by Belgrade were confirmed by the report that the Romanian State Security Council presented to Ceausescu in July 1968, whose primary sources indicated the preparation of military interventions led by the *Warsaw Treaty* in Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The text of the information sent to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party was based on "data and information on the preparation of the Warsaw Treaty intervention in Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Austria".¹¹

The sources also discussed a joint intervention compounded out of the Soviet, Bulgarian, Estonian, Polish, and Hungarian troops in order to restore the *socialist order*, based on a decision of the Political Committee of the *Warsaw Treaty*'s Political Committee and following Brezhnev's invitation. The Soviet leader – stated the report – convened Yuri Andropov, the President of the State Security Council, Andrei Greciko, and the Head of the USSR Major General and the Chief Commander of the *Warsaw Treaty*. Besides "defending the popular-socialist conquests threatened by the reformist adventurism of some leaders that undermine the cohesion and security of the socialist countries", the report included geopolitical calculations such as "repairing the strategic error produced by military withdrawal in Austria".¹²

The operational component of the invasion plan targeted the annihilation of the reformist movements and including three stages, as follows: the invasion of

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 366-376.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 367.

Czechoslovakia in August 1968, Romania in September, and Yugoslavia two to three weeks after taking control of Romania, with the indication that there were concrete data about the potential intervention in Austria. An operative telegram sent by Securitate officers based in Sevastopol reported an *ad-hoc* committee convened to analyze the developments from Czechoslovakia, but especially the adherence of the Ceaușescu-Tito binomial to Alexander Dubček's position as well as for a counter-reactions a position against them, as follows: "preventive, either prepared for military threats of Romania and Yugoslavia, ready to be applied even from the moment when the forces of the Treaty enter Czechoslovakia".¹³

An *operative telegram* dated March 27th, 1968, and sent from Rome, presented the Italian Communist Party's concerns about the developments within the Soviet *umbrella*, the Italians believing that the positions of independence embraced by the vassal states are perceived by Kremlin as anti-Soviet positions, thus preparing immediate countermeasures. Ion Gheorghe Maurer later stated that the limitation of the *Warsaw Treaty*'s intervention to Czechoslovakia was only due to pressure France and the United States of America exercised over the regime from Moscow.

The reactions formulated by the leadership from Bucharest to the imminent threat targeting three out of the national borders consisted of a bilateral approach by sending a special courier to Belgrade via the channel of communication agreed between the Romanian and Yugoslav State Security Departments. Tito was thus informed about Brezhnev's intentions materialized during the reunion from Crimea in July 1968, the thesis of the Romanian side being that the sovereignty and

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 372.

independence of Romania and Yugoslavia were jeopardized by the imminence of the Soviet intervention. The Yugoslav Interior Minister Stijacić urged Ceausescu to moderate his position so that to avoid provoking the Soviets even by responding to the challenges of the Soviet Union.

The main distinction points at the level of the Romanian-Yugoslav perceptions regarding the threat of external intervention were highlighted as the debates between Bucharest and Belgrade increased, each of the two sides having a different kind of interactions with Moscow, demonstrated also by the fact that Yugoslavia was the last target of the plan, while Romania was the second one, immediately after Czechoslovakia. The fact that the biggest threat gravitated around Romania was confirmed by the aforementioned statement of the Yugoslav Minister of Interior that even Tito shared the idea that Romania was the main objective in the area and not Yugoslavia.

The magnitude of such a regional intervention organized by the *Warsaw Treaty* would rather have been the logic of the *doctrine of limited sovereignty*.¹⁴ Inherently, there would have been a threat to peace and security, a matter that would come under the first article of the *Washington Treaty*,¹⁵ legitimizing NATO intervention in the context of discussing the use of force in the organization's responsibility area. The stated hypothesis may be contradicted by the fact that there was no counter-intervention for the liberation of Czechoslovakia, probably

¹⁴ R. Judson Mitchell, *The Brezhnev Doctrine and Communist Ideology*, in "The Review of Politics", volume 34, University of Notre Dame, Paris, 1972, pp. 190-209: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670500021045>.

¹⁵****The North Atlantic Treaty*, Washington D.C., April 4th, 1949: https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20120822_nato_treaty_en_light_2009.pdf.

motivated by the desire not to start an open confrontation between the two military blocs.

However, the diplomatic involvement led to de-stressing the relations, as the Yugoslav Government and the Yugoslav Communist Union pointed out in a *Joint Communiqué* from May, 16th, 1969: “The Government of the Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic and the Presidium of the Union of the Communists from Yugoslavia have found with satisfaction that the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and the Government of the USSR also expressed in their message the wish that joint efforts in reducing or removing the current hardships of our relations”.¹⁶ The threat of military intervention led, beyond the bilateral mobilization of the state structures, to an unprecedented rapprochement of relations between Romania and Yugoslavia, as demonstrated by Tito's 12 visits to Romania and complemented by Ceaușescu's visits to Yugoslavia.

The motivation behind Belgrade's unprecedented benevolence in relation to the new regime from Bucharest also had a *shadow* and a strictly geostrategic component, mentioning, in this case, the project of creating a Balkan federation reuniting out of the national territories of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania as well as Greece. The inclusion of Greece was far from an “initiative that deeply disturbed Kremlin”.¹⁷ In this context, the debate on the *Titoist* ambitions of creating a federation that would have encompassed the region as a whole came to the point where the blockade of the project was motivated by Moscow's direct action to counter it, hence internally undermining the future

¹⁶ ***NAR, file 10i, p. 58.

¹⁷ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogoian, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

federation by exploiting the historical animosities within the potential component republics.

In contrast, one could notice Ceaușescu's vision from the 1970s that called for the creation of a “clear and precise system of commitments by all states, coupled with concrete measures that would give all countries full guarantees that they are dismantling any harm to their sovereignty and independence”.¹⁸ Practically, the leader from Bucharest perceived the *inter-Balkan concert* as completing the *Helsinki Final Act* from 1975, in the absence of provisions on security and cooperation over the area from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and under the desire not to customize or regionalize the stated principles. Therefore, if the objectives assumed by the political process elaborated in the Finnish capital-city had general objectives, the Romanian representatives would reiterate Ceausescu's vision, with a view to a subsidiary approach of the cooperation mechanisms proposed in 1975.

The recently gained *status quo* of many of the states throughout the region, corroborated with Soviet interference within the domestic affairs of the so-called *popular* or *socialist republics*, led to low availability of the Southern and East European states towards the project of institutionalizing the Balkans. Therefore, since the eminently lax project proposed by Bucharest was viewed with reserves by the actors in the region, the idea of a state bordered by the Adriatic, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea was a project as utopian as *Yugoslavism* proved by the end of the Cold War.

¹⁸ Valentin Lipatti, *Balcanii de ieri și azi*, Bucharest, The Political Publishing House, 1988, p. 93.

The project for Balkan regional consultation was set out by Ceausescu during a speech at the UN General Assembly: “We believe that the realization of regional agreements has particular importance for international expansion. That is why Romania acts consistently for the development of broad relations of good neighborliness, understanding, and multilateral cooperation with all the Balkan countries, without distinction of social organization, in order to transform this area of the world into an area of cooperation and peace, lacking nuclear weapons”.¹⁹

On the occasion of the regional meetings, attended by Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Turkey participated, there was a contradiction not only at the level of willingness but also regarding the commitment of the Balkan states. A good example of this is the meeting from the Athens (January 26th – February 5th, 1976), the first post-war meeting of the Balkan actors that rejected the idea of implementing the CSCE-based principles within the region, based on the assumption to which “multilateral cooperation should not, however, affect the possibilities of bilateral cooperation”.²⁰ The degree of openness of Southeastern and East European actors was also demonstrated by the slowness with which *Aide-mémoire* after the meeting from Athens reached the decision-makers.

The impact of the *Balkans Concert* concept was reduced, with this sector meetings limited in prerogatives and influence, as follows: Ankara (September 26th – 29th, 1979), Sofia (March 15th – 19th, 1981), Bucharest (June 7th – 12th, 1982), Belgrade (June 19th – 23rd, 1984), Bucharest (December 23rd – 26th, 1986). The fact that the meetings were exclusively technical led to the adoption of final documents with

¹⁹ *Apud* Nicolae Ceaușescu, *România pe drumul construirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate*, 5th volume, Bucharest, Political Publishing House, 1971, p. 160.

²⁰ Valentin Lipatti, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

no political or legal binding as a result of the fact that researchers-based meetings could on no account lead to legally-binding acts. On the other hand, this state of affairs had demonstrated the lack of any commitment of the Balkan countries to the *multilateral development* that the so-called *Communist* or *Labor Parties* promoted as the core of their domestic and foreign policies.

The exception to the rule was the meeting held in Belgrade on November 12nd – 14th, 1988, and reunited the level of Foreign Affairs Ministers, this time with the participation of Albania, but when the demands for reform were evident in all the states concerned, perhaps with the exception of the Tirana regime. It is worth mentioning that, including in Romania, the energies of change have been activated. Somebody should bear in mind the revolt from Braşov, when Ceauşescu, “the absolute king of an extreme illustriousness”,²¹ was challenged for the first time during the night of November 15th, 1987.

Given the vehement rejection of the multilateral cooperation plans, the cooperation had been diminished to the bilateral level. As a result, the Romanian-Yugoslav mutual visits were to be concluded each time with a formula for the support of the *de facto* independent sovereign states, noticing the model of the *Joint Communiqué* adopted after Ceausescu's visit to Brioni (July 15th – 17th, 1973): “We have appreciated that positive developments in Europe can have sustainable results only to the extent that they ensure equal participation rights and full respect for the interests of all European countries, the definitive elimination of the use of force and the threat of force, overcoming the division into blocks, and their

²¹ Claudiu Iordache, *Anul 1989*, Bucharest, IRINI Publishing House, 2015, p. 84.

achievement to the same extent in all areas of the continent, including the Mediterranean".²²

Five years later, on the occasion of Ceaușescu's visit to Belgrade (November 16th – 17th, 1978), the Romanian and Yugoslav delegations adopted another *Joint Communiqué* drafted in a more vehement and punctual manner regarding the regional and European climate:

"Examining the situation in Europe in the light of the meetings from Belgrade and the desire expressed by the countries participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe to continue the process of *détente*, the two Presidents stressed the need to act intensively for a consistent and complete transposition stated in the *Helsinki Final Act*. They believe that economic, technical-scientific, and cultural relations, both bilateral and multilateral, need to be intensified among all the signatory states. The two Presidents underline once again the importance of adopting the military disarmament measures as an integral component of the process initiated by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, and without the European cooperation, reunification, and security cannot be envisaged".²³

A less known dimension of the relations between the two states is the active collaboration in the field of intelligence gathering, which has evolved to the mutual support of the oppressive apparatuses of the two states' political police. It was the

²² ***NAR, file 7/1973, p. 32.

²³ ***NAR, file 8/1973, p. 69.

moment when the appearance of leaders that enforced the reforming movement turned a pronounced oppressive face, the Romanian-Yugoslav cooperation at law enforcement structures reaching to the point of *genuine demographic permutations over the state border*.²⁴ The co-operation of the coercion structures from Bucharest and Belgrade had been advanced, since the 1970s, mentioning the cooperation of the political police organizations, with Romania and Yugoslavia even conducting joint operations.

It firstly happened on August 3rd, 1975, when the first operation of annihilating some Yugoslav political opponents from Bucharest was carried out, based on a collaboration between the State Security Department of Yugoslavia and the State Security Council of Romania, upon Tito`s personal request addressed to Ceaușescu. The conduct of the operation was confirmed by Ion Mihai Pacepa, as he stated the existence of “the victims as a result of the imprisonment, which determined the death of two persons were later handed over to the SDB in coffins.”²⁵

The object of the operation concluded in August 1975 was the annihilation of Alexandar Opojevic, a former Partisan Commander and a Commander of Zemun Polje Airport, who refuged in Bucharest during 1948, from the beginning he became the head of the exiled anti-Titoist movement from Romania as well as Vladco Dapcević, a former close collaborator of Tito`s exiled to Brussels and arriving on a leave-in Bucharest at the beginning of August 1975. The disappearance of the two took place during the night of August 9th, 1975 when after dinner at the Opojević family house from Grigore Moxa Street, Dapcević was

²⁴ Ion Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²⁵ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogoian, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

heading to Dorobanți Hotel together with Opojević, alongside with Djoka Stojanović, Dapcević's bodyguard.

The eyewitnesses described the events that happened on August 9th as follows: "A person who had to meet Dapcevic reported to Maria Opojević that he had been told at the reception that the Belgian guests had left the hotel at midnight. Two other people, the Merkušev brothers, who were supposed to lead Dapcević and Stojanovic to the airport received the same answer".²⁶ A year later the Yugoslav press was to disseminate the news that Dapcević was arrested on Yugoslav territory, under the action of carrying out *anti-state activity*, then prosecuting a lawsuit whose indictment he rejected. The trial was followed by a hearing by Opojević and Stojanović, who testified that they had been kidnapped in Romania, which led to the suspension of the hearing and a 20-year prison sentence in the case of Opojević.

Tito's death in 1980 and the inherent exchange of generations in Belgrade had a long-term and medium-term impact consisting of the cooling of relations between the two states, Yugoslav espionage on the Romanian territory becoming again a phenomenon of considerable amplitude, mostly revitalizing the practices applied before the tightening of the relations after Ceaușescu's ascension to power. If, in the early years of the communist regime, the targets of Belgrade's covered agents mainly consisted of Romania's relations with the Soviet Union and the United States of America, followed in the order of importance by Romania's attitude towards the non-alignment of Yugoslavia, after 1980 the only point of convergence the traditional objects of Yugoslav information gathering in Romania remaining the military capabilities and the facilities to multiply the weapons.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 121.

After Tito died, the Yugoslav intelligence experienced a “numerical-qualitative development of the informational potential, from now reoriented toward new thematic topics of information, as well as the reactivation of those abandoned or preserved”.²⁷ The agents operating in Romania since 1948, who, after obtaining the status of political immigrants, were reactivated managing to infiltrate within the Romanian social, political, cultural, and educational structures.

One should bear in mind the activity of Vuk Drašković, the Romanian authorities issuing information over the suspicions of belonging to the *Serbian Renewal Movement*,²⁸ with the purpose of creating *Greater Serbia* thus targeting Romania’s Banat. The same intelligence sources reported on a so-called special *commando* suspected as being coordinated by Drašković and meant to create the premises for the separation of Banat from Romania and for annexing the territory to Yugoslavia. This alleged subversive state activity, now performed by one of Romania’s closest allies until Tito’s death, in the face of an imminent danger of the Soviet invasion in 1968, overlapped a cultural revolution following Ceaușescu’s visit to Pyongyang in 1978 that could only be achieved by adopting the North Korean isolationism and the mechanisms of shortage reproduction.²⁹

The draconian measures implemented during Ceaușescu’s rule were reported by the Embassy of Yugoslavia in Bucharest, as follows: “The situation is desperate. The starvation condition is worse than during the war when there was something to eat at least in the countryside. At present, the villages are as hungry

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 270.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 271.

²⁹ Leon Aron, *Road to the Temple: Truth, Memory, Ideas and Idealism in the making of the Russian Revolution, 1987-1991*, New York & London, Yale University Press, 2012, p. 142.

as the towns are. How does a worker can be fed with 300 grams of bread, no cooking oil, some sugar, no meat, no potatoes, no heat, no electricity? How to work? Those who have children are desperate, especially because for bringing the only liter of milk they are allowed to purchase, they have to wait for hours".³⁰

One should take into consideration that the aforementioned statement corresponded to a diplomatic representation whose country had more than 50% of the trade relations developed with the West,³¹ but especially whose fundamental law elaborated in 1963 stipulated the liberalization as a leitmotiv both of the domestic and of the foreign policy. It should not pass unnoticed that what the Yugoslavs reported did not fit into the present propaganda customs, manifested including in Bucharest, but traditionally in the Yugoslav foreign policy meant a policy of balancing between the two blocks with benevolent neutrality towards the Westerners.

In antithesis, we find Ceaușescu's speech, which went increasingly into the idea of a state in the position of a *besieged fortress*, largely empathetic with the isolationism promoted by its homologous from Tirana, namely Enver Hodja and followed Ramiz Alia since 1980. Like the Albanian leaders, the leader from Bucharest perceived any reform dialogue as being deviance, so he preferred to isolate the regime so that the *forces of the movement* would have not penetrated an increasingly closed society trapped inside a fortress ossified by the gerontocracy that refused to accept the imminence of change. The era when Ceaușescu was perceived as a rebel in the Communist camp was already set aside, the Soviet Union led by Gorbachev fighting for change and replacing the old generation that

³⁰ Constantin Hlihor, *op. cit.*, 172.

³¹ Nicolae Ciachir, Panait Gălățeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

Nicolae Ceaușescu belonged to, along with some conservative leaders within the *Iron Curtain*.

The Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party demonstrated an unconsciousness even when the rationalization measures led to a general pauperization despite the *smoke curtain* formed around the idea of Ceaușescu as a world leader. The external involvement expressed in the declarations evoking the goal of a chemical-free zone in the Balkans, as part of the development of regional security and cooperation,³² was a strictly propagandistic component of a solitary regime in terms of the increasingly radical nature of the socio-economic policies elaborated by Ceaușescu's *camarilla*.

The statement of former Presidential Adviser Silviu Curticeanu remains fully edifying: “By the end of the 1980s, centralization became draconian, triggered a constant and unequal battle of ministers for each ton, gram of raw material or kilowatt of electricity. The monthly plans and the technical-military supply programs, earnestly drawn up by specialists in all fields of activity, became simple paper petitions, because, armed with a black pen and more and more unconsciousness, Ceaușescu changed the figures as he desired or following his inspiration and becoming an aggressive presence, increasingly difficult to circumvent”.³³

Alongside with the decline in terms of living conditions, the communist authorities in Romania tightened the existing regime of traveling abroad, which led to an increase in illegal border crossings to Yugoslavia after 1977, exploited by

³² Valentin Lipatti, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

³³ Ioan Scurtu, *Revoluția română din decembrie 1989 în context internațional*, Bucharest, IRRD Publishing House, 2006, pp. 174-175.

Belgrade counterparts by “the research and the informational exploitation of the Romanian turncoats”,³⁴ in conjunction with facilitating the passage of the Romanian fugitives to Austria. Securitate-based sources also recalled the extradition of the fugitives unable to provide valuable information for the Yugoslav authorities, thus preserving a *façade* compliance with the bilateral agreements signed between Bucharest and Belgrade. The circumscription of the Romanian authorities toward the intentions of the Yugoslav side was demonstrated by the diminishing cooperation at the level of the Ministries of the Interior, respectively of the Romanian-Yugoslav security bodies.

The investigation of the Romanian refugees was carried out at the Padinska-Skela camp, the points of interest on the agenda being the popular state of mind, the extent to which the population was willing to revolt against the regime, as well as the Romanian military capabilities, biographical data of the military decision-makers or the strategic objectives. Contrary to the second and third points, which were, in fact, traditional Yugoslav espionage targets, we add interest in testing the availability of the Serb-Croat community to support certain actions of Belgrade on Romania's territory, thereby noticing the geostrategic instrumentation of the Yugoslav diaspora in Romania. The same sources at the level of the Romanian former intelligence structures mentioned the cooperation between the Occidental and Yugoslav services, given that “some Western services had taken over the manipulation of the dissidents created by the KGB to make trouble for Nicolae Ceaușescu”.³⁵

³⁴ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogoian, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

The information-gathering activity continued with “Tanjug’s propaganda for undermining and removing Ceaușescu”,³⁶ which had contributed to the tightening of already-difficult Romanian-Yugoslav relations. At the same time, there should be taken into account the expansion of the Yugoslav intelligence structures since the spring of 1989, with “the Yugoslav espionage services being massively and consistently involved in the preparation and conduct of planned events for the removal of Nicolae Ceaușescu”.³⁷

At the same time, the position of the Croatian branch of the federal administration, which, according to sources based in the intelligence community, was unanimous in favor of external intervention for the overthrow of Nicolae Ceaușescu.³⁸ The veracity of these sources is questioned precisely by the developments within December 1989, namely the collapse of the communist regime after the Romanian Revolution. The question marks in this direction also appear on the floor of Moscow’s opposition for an intervention against Ceaușescu’s rule, determined also by Yugoslav internal affairs: the fact that the Yugoslav state was on the brink of implosion did not give the necessary argument for the feasibility of Belgrade’s intervention in Romania since domestically the federal republic was weakened by regional separatism.

Although the information-gathering activity of the Yugoslav authorities remained a current fact, especially during the evolution from December 1989, their role in the collapse of the Ceaușescu regime can only be minimal, as Belgrade could not engage in an operation of such a magnitude. And this because the overthrow

³⁶ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogoian, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 273-274.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 276.

of a regime is a complicated logistic operation simply because it requires high-level contacts both in the target state and in the future coalition of the will, which were not only non-existent but also undesirable as it had to affirm the head of the Soviet diplomacy. On the other hand, the disputed statehood of the Yugoslav state represented the main concern, namely, the real capacity of the regime from Belgrade to determine the political developments in the immediate vicinity, in the context of the collapse of the federal republic that was only a matter of time.

On September 19th, 1989 the Political Executive Council's verbatim report demonstrated that the problem of an intervention with Yugoslav participation was not even at the level of negotiation since the "Yugoslavs did not have a firm stance".³⁹ In this sense, a state whose internal coherence almost non-existent that would lead to a separation of the union republics during the forthcoming civil wars could not undertake such a far-reaching operation, which is also problematic from the point of view of resources and political will.

The state of affairs had since been confirmed, including the work of the Yugoslav General-Consulate from Timișoara – which is true that it has carried out an information and propaganda activity – but acted autonomously from the headquarters. Despite this, Mirko Atanacković, the Yugoslav General-Consul from Timișoara, would declare that "he acted directly for the preparation of the Romanian Revolution"⁴⁰ – in the context in that the real involvement on the part of the Consulate was to take a list of claims submitted by the protesters of Timișoara, for the only reason that there was no diplomatic or consular

³⁹ Ion Calafeteanu, *Când Europa arde...*, Bucharest, IRRD Publishing House, 2015, p. 29.

⁴⁰ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogoian, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

representation in the town over the Bega than the Yugoslav republic – has little credibility.

The issue of the coordination between the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry and the Yugoslav Consulate from Timișoara was mentioned in a statement by Filip Teodorescu, according to whose relating “A special agitation of officials from the Yugoslav Consultation was reported. They have made at least two trips to Yugoslavia to bring information, video, and audiotapes during the events. In fact, the Yugoslav Consulate was one of the main sources of misinformation and intoxication of the world’s public opinion about events in Timișoara. Much later, a Serbian friend suggested that the information did not reach Belgrade, because the General-Consul from Timișoara was not a Serb, but a Croat”.⁴¹

Some sources belonging to the Romanian former intelligence community revealed alleged links between Croatian security officers of Yugoslav security services and homologous within the information structures belonging to other countries, links unhindered by the Federal Foreign Affairs Secretariat. At the same time, it was reconfirmed the refusal of the Yugoslav officers to follow the recommendations coming from the power plant, mentioning “the independent actions outside official duties, on nationalist grounds, in cooperation with the Hungarian agents from Romania under diplomatic cover and to whom they had provided data and information on events developments in Timișoara”.⁴²

Whatever the basis of Romania's communist information community had been, the hypotheses formulated by the Securitate come to show exactly the opposite of Belgrade's intervention against the regime from Bucharest, since

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 277-278.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

Yugoslavia was not by far a coagulated state, but rather a state *colossus* with clay feet. By partially accepting the argumentation developed by the communist intelligence services, we can conclude that a state incapable of coordinating its agents does not have the necessary tools to act to change the regime in another state. The fact that, in the same year, the secessionist problems were going to get worse in southern Serbia, it precisely confirmed the malfunctions of the power structures, which made it impossible to validate the thesis that a fragmented state could look interfere with the internal order of another since its own order was largely contested.

At the same time, there are suspicions about the way the Yugoslav media replicated the Romanian Revolution,⁴³ mainly due to the exaggeration found in the reports regarding the number of victims from Timișoara and Bucharest, the figures even going to the number of 60,000 dead.⁴⁴ The accusations against Tanjug went in the direction of *incriminating* it for disinformation, as the Yugoslav press agency was the first to release rumors about the events happening in Romania during December 1989. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that the accounts were hot, which, of course, implies an exponentially increased appetite for the sensational area, as the sources of information were not the most credible or objective.

As a synthesis for the Romanian-Yugoslav relations, the oscillation between the Balkan cooperation projects, often reduced to exclusively technocrat cooperation, and the recurrent data collection and projects at the level of the

⁴³ Ion Bucur, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁴⁴ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogoan, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

information community can be brought to attention, the existence of collaborations at the level of law enforcement structures and at the level of the secret services. The interactions between Bucharest and Belgrade can also be viewed from a phased perspective, reaching the climax in 1965, when Ceausescu took over the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party, and until Tito's death in 1980.

Those 15 years of Romanian-Yugoslav relations have been marked by numerous bilateral visits at the highest level, but the direct interactions between the two actors were ingrained with a certain degree of reserve for assuming positive security engagement, especially after 1971, when Ceaușescu's visit to China and North Korea gave him the vision of the application of Asian communist practices in Romania.

At the same time, Tito's disappearance led to a gradual deterioration of the relations between Bucharest and Belgrade, especially in 1989, when the contestation of the communist regimes from Romania and Yugoslavia collapsed. If in Romania we only dealt with a regime's contestation, in the Yugoslav case the disputes went toward a separatist direction. It can be concluded that the congruent direction of the Romanian-Yugoslav reformism has led to the formation of a relationship based on the congruent paradigms on socialism, while the clash between the *gerontocratic conservatism* of the last years of the Ceaușescu's brought to the attention of the informational community.