

A POLITICAL POWER STRUGGLE IN ROMANIA: GHEORGHE APOSTOL VERSUS NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU

OPRIȘ Petre*, AVRAM Cezar**

Abstract. *The struggle for power in communist Romania was evident both during the reign of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and during the takeover and consolidation of power by Nicolae Ceaușescu. On the basis of archive documents, the authors bring into debate the removal of political life of Gheorghe Apostol, who, according to the wish of Gheorghiu-Dej, had to take the reins of power in the party and the state.*

Keywords: *committee, letter, party, state, leader.*

During the past 20 years several hypotheses have been circulated regarding the Soviet secret services driving some Romanian Communist Party veterans against Nicolae Ceaușescu's decisions – first Constantin Pârvulescu's actions on 14th of February 1968¹, 23rd of November 1979 (at the 12th Congress of the RCP²) and at the beginning of the year 1989 (on the occasion of drafting "The Letter of the Six") as well as the actions carried out by Gheorghe Apostol a few moments after the RCP's 10th Congress and 14 years later before the start of the RCP's 13th Congress, maybe even simultaneous with the generals (Ion Ioniță and Nicolae Militaru's) preparations for the coup d'état planned for October 1984, and also at the beginning of the year 1989 (the famous "The Letter of the Six").

It is obvious that the Soviets had good reasons for causing troubles to Nicolae Ceaușescu, at least at the propagandist level, both at the 12th Congress and at the 13th Congress of the RCP, on account of the harsh attitude displayed by the Romanian leader at the meetings of the Consultative Political Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (especially that in Moscow, 22nd-23rd November 1978). At the same time, the political, economic and diplomatic game initiated by Nicolae Ceaușescu in the spring of 1984, at the start of the discussions about extending the *Warsaw Treaty* validity period had irritated the Moscow authorities and, in order to punish the Romanian leader, the Soviet secret services could call on either the Romanian generals who had studied in the Soviet Union in the fifties or the R.C.P. veterans, gradually eliminated by Nicolae Ceaușescu from all the leading positions held during the dictatorship of his predecessor, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej.

*PhD, Lieutenant Colonel.

**PhD 1st Deg. Scientific Researcher „C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor” Institute for Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities, Craiova, Romanian Academy.

¹For details, see Gavril Preda, Petre Opriș, *România in Warsaw Treaty Organization. Documents (1954-1968)*, volume II, The National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, Bucharest, 2009, p. 336-343.

²For details, see *The 12th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party*, 19-23 November 1979. Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981; *The History of Romania in Dates*, coordinated by Dinu C. Giurescu, Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 675; Vasile Toma Vlase, "Pârvulescu Incident" at the 12th Congress of the RCP, in "The Dossiers of History", year XI, no. 2 (114)/2006, p. 20-22; Petre Opriș, *Communist, but anti-Ceaușescu: "Pârvulescu Case"*, in "The Dossiers of History", year XI, no. 11 (123)/2006, p. 33-36.

In our opinion, the historical research on Gheorghe Apostol's activity against Nicolae Ceaușescu can start with the interview given in February 1990 by the former prime secretary of the Romanian Workers Party. At that time Gheorghe Apostol declared to the journalist Ion Jianu that "in 1984 very probably, seeing that no congress had discussed the issues contained in that letter of 3 pages (drown up and sent to Ceaușescu after the RCP's 10th Congress – P. Opriș). I decided to make a summary of it "I send a letter of 17-18 pages to Ceaușescu, in which I was requesting that it should be analyzed at the 13th Congress. I was also pointing that if the contents of the letter were going to be discussed by the Executive Political Committee, I should also be called to take part in that discussion. I did not get any answer and that is why after receiving the permission to return to my country [in 1988], I took the liberty of taking action (our underlining)"³.

Obviously, Gheorghe Gheorghiu felt deep resentment towards Nicolae Ceaușescu after the ending of the contest for succession to the Romanian Workers Party leadership and we can suppose that Gheorghe Apostol was influenced by these feelings when he first discussed with Silviu Brucan about a draft of "the letter of the six".

Then, during the meeting of the Executive political Committee on 18th of August 1989 Nicolae Ceaușescu stated that Gheorghe Apostol "had got in touch with the foreign secret services and, driven by those, he had worked out several letters (our underlining)"⁴. The supreme leader of the R.C.P. may have remembered the letter received in 1984 from Gheorghe Apostol, letter mentioned by Silviu Curticeanu in a volume of memoirs⁵.

³Ion Jianu, *Gheorghe Apostol and "The Letter of the Six"*, Old Court Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008, p. 60.

⁴See the full quotation in Annexe no. 1.

⁵The former chief of the Office section of the C.C. of the R.C.P. mentioned the following: "The moment of Ceaușescu's coming to power has been described in various ways, but it failed to interest me. Much later I learned, absolutely by chance, a few of the things that had happened then from a letter written by Gheorghe Apostol, commented and annotated by Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu, during a discussion that took place at Snagov.

It seems that Gheorghe Apostol was among those first and foremost affected by Ceaușescu's having been elected in the year 1986 or 1987, I don't remember exactly (the correct year is 1984 – *ours note*), Apostol, ambassador in Brasil at that time, wrote a long letter to Ceaușescu, on that subject. [...].

In that letter, in essence, Apostol blamed Ceaușescu for the fact that after Dej's death he had «usurped» the position of prime-secretary of the party's Central Committee.

As far as I remember, his arguments were the following:

Dej explicitly nominated Apostol as his successor to the position of prime-secretary; Ceaușescu learned about that and, taking advantage of his status within the party and using the pretext of medical orders, managed to cut any contact of Dej with the other members of the Permanent Bureau.

On hearing this accusation, *Ceaușescu stated in a firm but calm way: «He is lying! Dej didn't have the right to determine who would be elected at the top of the party!» [...].*

In order to get that position, [Nicolae Ceaușescu] *benefited from the treason committed by Maurer, repeatedly characterised in the letter as a true «political swindler».*

At this remark, *both of them (Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu – ours note), almost simultaneously burst into prolonged gales of laughter, which seemed never-ending to me [...].*

At the end of the talk, Ceaușescu coldly concluded: Apostol has been a weak man; nobody wanted him because he would have remained in the wake of «those people» and «would have let the country go to rack and ruin».

As one can notice from the stenogram of the meeting of the Executive Political Committee on 18th of August 1989, it was Nicolae Ceaușescu who initiated the forming of a group of “reliable comrades” who were to discuss with Gheorghe Apostol and determine him to admit that he had betrayed the country and the party he belonged to. The respective method was by no means new and both Gheorghe Apostol and Nicolae Ceaușescu may have remembered the identical way in which Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej – the supreme leader of the Romanian Workers’ Party – had acted in the autumn of 1953, on the occasion of the interrogation of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu⁶, designating Constantin Pârvulescu to discuss with their former party mate in order to obtain a self-evident declaration about the betrayal Pătrășcanu had allegedly committed – a declaration to be later used in the trial which took place between 6-13 April 1954.

The same method was used in the years 1953 and 1956, when a commission made up of (*nota bene!*) Gheorghe Apostol, Alexandru Moghioroș, Petre Borilă și Constantin Pârvulescu interrogated Ana Pauker⁷.

Incidentally, two documents from the former archives of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party confirm the fact that Gheorghe Apostol was no longer among Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej’s most important collaborators, almost two years before the death of the party’s supreme leader. For instance, during the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers’ Party on 5th of June 1963, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej nominated Nicolae Ceaușescu to travel to the U.S.S.R. in order to hand to Nikita Hrușciiov an important letter (Moscow, 8th June 1953) from the part of the Politburo and to invite the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.) to undertake a working visit to Romania. In the stenogram of that meeting it was mentioned: “[Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej] I propose that comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu should go with this material. Do you agree to this proposition? (All comrades agree – our underlining)”⁸.

Two weeks later, the Politburo meeting on 21st of June 1963 discussed the formation of the Romanian delegation that was to participate in the discussion with Nikita Hrușciiov at Scroviște (24th of June 1963). Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej suggested they propose to the supreme leader of the

As always, Elena Ceaușescu used a much more «learned» choice of words: «*That pig, drunkard, fornicator, he has always been good-for-nothing!*» (our underlining)”. Silviu Curticeanu, *The testimony of lived history. Overlapping images*, Historia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008, p. 337-340.

⁶For details concerning Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej’s proposition and Petre Borilă’s and Miron Constantinescu’s opinions expressed at the meeting of the Politburo of the CC of the RWP on 2 September 1953, a meeting in which Gheorghe Apostol also participated, see Mircea Chirițoiu, *Between David and Goliath. Romania and Iugoslavia in the balance of Cold War*, supervision of the volume, introductory study: Silviu B. Moldovan, editor: Gheorghe Buzatu, Publishing House „Demiurge”, Iași, 2005, p. 209-211.

⁷*Ibidem*, p. 268-269; 281.

⁸The Central Historical National Archives (C.H.N.A.). *The fund of the C.C. of the R.C.P. – the Office* – dossier no. 25/1963, f. 24.

C.P.S.U. that all the Politburo members of the C.C. of the R.W.P. (Central Committee of the Romanian Working Party) should take part in the meeting with their counterparts from Moscow. Being directly involved in organising this event, Emil Bodnăraș and Nicolae Ceaușescu each held the opinion that two possible delegations should be prepared⁹.

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej agreed to the idea and the stenogram of that meeting recorded the following:

Cde. Gh. Gheorghiu Dej: Yes. What about the other possibility? That Dej, Maurer, Ceaușescu, Chivu, Bârlădeanu, Bodnăraș and Răutu participate.

Cde. Chivu Stoica: Shouldn't Gaston [Marin] also be there?

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: Let him be too.

Cde. Gh. Gheorghiu Dej: Yes.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer: The most chances are that the whole Politburo participates.

Cde. Alexandru Bârlădeanu: He [Hrușciov] likes the audience to be as large as possible.

Cde. Gh. Gheorghiu Dej: Then let us consider the matter settled"¹⁰.

The enumeration by the party's supreme leader of his most important collaborators is very interesting as Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (involuntarily, in our opinion) mentioned a hierarchy probably already existent in his subconscious and then reinforced in March 1965 – when Nicolae Ceaușescu took over the party's leadership with the help of Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Chivu Stoica and Emil Bodnăraș.

⁹*Idem*, dossier nr. 33/1963, f. 22; 25.

¹⁰*Ibidem*, f. 25-26. It is interesting to mention that the American diplomats in Bucharest and Moscow tried to get details about the Romanian-Soviet dissensions and about when the meeting between Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nikita Hrușciov was going to take place. For instance, the telegram sent to the American Secretary of State by William A. Crawford (chief of USA legation in Romania) on 28 June 1963 had the following content: „A reliable source of the Legation informed us that Gheorghiu-Dej had been seen in a restaurant in Bucharest on 26 June, late in the afternoon. Though less than 24 hours have passed since his departure from Bucharest by a Soviet plane, it is still possible that he had paid a short visit to the Soviet Union”. *William A. Crawford, Minister Plenipotentiary (Romania), to David Dean Rusk, Secretary of State, Bucharest, Romania, June 28, 1963*; File: 9 POL 15 Government RUM, p. 9; Box 4028; POL 6 PROMINENT PERSONS, RUM 2/1/63, POL RWANDA (Pol Prominent Persons Rum Rwanda); Central Foreign Policy File, 1963 (CFP File 1963); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives at College Park, College Park MD (NACP).

On his turn, the American ambassador Foy David Kohler wired from Moscow to the USA Secretary of State (2 July 1963) in order to inform him that the deputy chief of the Romanian diplomatic mission in Moscow had talked to a Western diplomat (speaker of Romanian) in the afternoon of 1 July 1963 and pointed out that Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej had not attended the ceremonies organised in Berlin by the East-German authorities, but had sent a telegram of congratulations. At the same time, the Romanian diplomat refused to answer the question regarding a possible meeting between the Romanian leader and Nikita Hrușciov, only mentioning that Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej had not travelled in Romania lately. *Foy David Kohler, Ambassador (the Soviet Union), to David Dean Rusk, Secretary of State, Moscow, USSR, July 2, 1963*; File: 9 POL 15 Government RUM, p. 7; Box 4028; Pol Prominent Persons Rum Rwanda; CFP File 1963; RG 59; NACP.

ANNEXE NO. 1

18 August 1989

The protocol and stenogram of the meeting of the Executive Political Committee of the C.C. of the R.C.P. on 18th of August 1989, during which there were discussions about Gheorghe Apostol's letter addressed to the Central Committee of the R.C.P. and to the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania (extracts)

ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

No. 2340

*The Archives
of the Executive Political Committee
of the C.C. of the R.C.P.
No. 1332/04.09.1989*

Protocol no. 17

of the meeting of the Executive Political Committee [of the C.C. of the R.C.P.]
on August 1989

The meeting was presided by comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party.

The meeting was attended by the following comrades: Bobu Emil, Ceaușescu Elena, Ciobanu Lina, Coman Ion, Constantin Nicolae, Dăscălescu Constantin, Dincă Ion, Dobrescu Miu, Fazekas Ludovic, Mănescu Manea, Olteanu Constantin, Oprea Gheorghe, Pană Gheorghe, Popescu Dumitru, Rădulescu Gheorghe, Andrei Ștefan, Bălan Radu, David Gheorghe, Gere Mihai, Giosan Nicolae, Milea Vasile, Mureșan Ana, Pacoste Cornel, Petrescu Barbu, Postelnicu Tudor, Radu Constantin, Radu Ion, Stoian Ion, Toma Ioan, Totu Ioan, Ursu Ioan.

Comrades Curticeanu Silviu, Sîrbu Ion, ministers and other leadership members mentioned in the annexe had been invited.

The meeting started at 10.30 and ended at 11.25.

The agenda:

- I. Certain matters regarding the preparation of the XIVth Congress of the RCP.
- II. Report on attaining the main approved technical and economic parameters for the industrial production capacities in the second quarter of the year.

III. Certain external matters.

IV. Other matters.

I. – III. [...]

IV. The Executive Political Committee also approved:

1– 3. [...]

4. The Executive Political Committee was informed about the content of the letter through which Gheorghe Apostol, guilty of breaking the laws of the country and of disregarding the duties of a Romanian citizen, pleads the party leadership and the State Council for clemency. Regarding this, the Executive Political Committee decided that propositions be submitted concerning the measures that should be further, also for informing the party members about Gheorghe Apostol's serious deviations.

ss. Nicolae Ceaușescu

The Archives of the Executive Political Committee of the C.C. of the R.C.P.

No. 1332/04.09.1989

Stenogram

of the meeting of the Executive Political Committee

of the CC of the R.C.P. on 18th August 1989

The meeting was presided by comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party.

The meeting was attended by the following comrades: Bobu Emil, Ceaușescu Elena, Ciobanu Lina, Coman Ion, Constantin Nicolae, Dăscălescu Constantin, Dincă Ion, Dobrescu Miu, Fazekas Ludovic, Mănescu Manea, Olteanu Constantin, Oprea Gheorghe, Pană Gheorghe, Popescu Dumitru, Rădulescu Gheorghe, Andrei Ștefan, Bălan Radu, David Gheorghe, Gere Mihai, Giosan Nicolae, Milea Vasile, Mureșan Ana, Pacoste Cornel, Petrescu Barbu, Postelnicu Tudor, Radu Constantin, Radu Ion, Stoian Ion, Toma Ioan, Totu Ioan, Ursu Ioan.

Comrades Curticeanu Silviu, Sîrbu Ion, Emilian Dobrescu, Gheorghe Fulea, Ilie Văduva, Dumitru Apostoiu, Constantin Mitea, Eugen Florescu, Nicolae Mihalache, Nicolae Ionescu, ministers and other leadership staff mentioned in the annexe had been invited.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: Have you seen the agenda, comrades?

Haven't you got other problems? No.

NUMBER 1

Matters concerning the 14th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party

Actually, in 10 days the meetings of the local Party organisations are to start and so all the propositions for the delegates to the congress and for the Central Committee members which are to be discussed during the party meetings should be finalised.

The commissions formed by the Plenary meeting have dealt with all these problems, have worked, have brought several improvements and, at present, the propositions for the Central Committee delegates in accordance with the norms established by the Central Committee Plenary, have been finalised. We are going to have 3328 delegates, out of whom 380 are central ones, as compared with 375 at the previous congress. It is a small rise. On the whole, there is a rise of 200 delegates.

With party activists, the number stays the same: 50-50, with State machinery 165-165, people of science 100, with local delegates, the number has risen from 2750 to 2946, workers: from 1064 to 1230 and accordingly, in the other fields. With peasants, from 465 to 490. With clerks it is a smaller rise, from 457 to 460. There is a bigger increase with workers.

Party activists have remained the same in number: 450-450 and similarly, in the other fields there are no big changes.

The number of women has risen from 36,25% to 38%, with German nationality from 92,05 to 92,06%, with Hungarian nationality from 6,65 to 6,85%, all these numbers are in relation to the number of party members.

There is also a corresponding distribution in the counties, in relation to the number of party members. Likewise, the central delegates are distributed in the counties in the same measure as before, plus the presents rises, 5 central delegates, which does not represent a great change.

From this point of view we could give instructions to the counties that the local Party organizations should start the concrete work of discussing the propositions.

As for the Central Committee, taking into account what we decided at the Plenary, the commission has submitted the proposition to increase the number of Central Committee members with ten, that is to have 465 and we will see why this is necessary? [...].

Regarding central candidates, a reduction is proposed from 183 to 157, while the number of local candidates rises from 263 to 308. At the same time the number of central party activists [is decreasing] from 39 to 38.

Taking into account the modifications, the party machinery staff decreases from 82 to 60, with the mass organisations from 15 to 13, men of science [decrease] in number from 35 to 34, the officers have been and have remained 12.

Apart from the above-mentioned increase, a modification appears with local candidates. As compared with the situation at the 13th Congress, when the workers directly involved in production were 9, now we propose 45. I mean people who work directly in the field of production. We have discussed that the number of workers working directly in production should increase. The number of peasants should be 20. In fact, these are the changes. We had in mind to ensure a larger number of workers working directly in production. Consequently, this led to a reduction of party activists from 145 to 135. We are talking about local party activists.

The number of enterprise managers has remained the same and, correspondingly, there is the distribution at the level of counties, in keeping with our principles. The essential fact is this rise by 10% and the proposition for increasing the number of workers and peasants.

Taking into consideration all these, I would propose that the future rise in number of workers and peasants should also be mentioned in our official statement, namely the fact that we have analysed decided on this. This is important both for us and for the others, where the number of workers is diminishing. We had in view to underline the necessity of saying this, that within the party the activists who are workers by trade represent 70%, but we have to emphasize that the number of workers directly involved in production is increasing, in order to maintain a character of a workers' party.

This is the matter I wanted to bring forward and the problems I wanted to discuss, related to the propositions for delegates and members of the Central Committee at the 14th Congress.

If you agree or if you have other suggestions?

- All comrades agree.

[...]

NUMBER 7

Note regarding participation in the annual meetings of I.M.F.-BIRD

[*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu*:] Those who usually participate here are the ministers of finance. It is going to take place in September.

Cde. Ioan Totu: On 21st of September.

Cde. Elena Ceaușescu: On this occasion we should clarify several problems related to them. We have enough problems with these organisations, that should be cleared up because we have even gold there. You haven't presented everything.

Cde. Ioan Totu: By 27-28 August we will display our point of view.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: Let's agree to the participation and also to our measures and position regarding the problems and activity of these organisations.

- All comrades agree.

These points have been on the agenda.

We have another problem, comrades, - a staff problem.

For the position of prime secretary of Botoșani county party committee, comrade Nae Elena is proposed, who was previously prime secretary in Sibiu and now works as deputy chief of the Organisational Section [of the C.C. of the R.C.P.]. Do you agree to this proposition?

- All comrades agree.

Comrades, there is still another problem. Gheorghe Apostol has recently sent a letter to the Central Committee of the party, in which he admits his espionage activity and is now asking for clemency. We set a group of comrades to talk to him.

It might be good that comrades Constantin Nicolae and Ion Coman who had talked to him together with a group of former underground fighters should inform the Executive Political Committee.

Cde. Ion Coman: Comrade Constantin should inform, because we have drawn up the material together and I agree with him.

(Cde. Constantin Nicolae reads out the material concerning the discussions with Gheorghe Apostol.)

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: It is the letter addressed by him to the Central Committee that ought to be read, not this material. Give the letter to me, please.

Cde. Elena Ceaușescu: The letter, as the rest is unimportant.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: Among others in the letter, he says that he had disregarded his duties as a Romanian citizen and his obligations to observe the laws of the country, that he feels a deep regret and addresses a plea for clemency to the party leadership and the State Council. He says he realizes he had infringed the Party rules and had got to the grievous situation of having placed himself in the employ of those people whom he had once fought against.

He herself (*sic!*) admits he had got into touch with the foreign espionage services and, driven by these, had drawn up several letters.

Cde. Elena Ceaușescu: This is the essential.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: He placed himself in the service of imperialist and Soviet espionage. This is the reality. It is admitted by him and, at the request of those people, he, like any traitor, had drawn up all kinds of materials. This is the essential point.

And now, after promising not to do that again, yesterday he said in front of the comrades that he realized what he deserved [:] “capital punishment”. This is the essential of what he put in his letter.

Anyone can come and say whether they have an opinion or another, but it is he who is the main culprit. It is known, [Silviu] Brucan is an old agent. They placed themselves in the employ of the foreign secret services and organised all kinds of actions.

Of course, now he declares he repents and begs forgiveness.

Cde. Elena Ceaușescu: That is what he should have said.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: That is why I said that some comrades who are familiar with these things should go and talk to him. That’s it.

Certainly, we will finally have to inform the party – in a way or another – about this treason and see about the way to act. Treason is treason; placing oneself in the employ of foreign espionage is inconsistent with the position of party member. The problem concerning the capacity of party member was solved long time ago, but we shall see about the measures to be taken so that, however, people shouldn’t consider that someone can betray the country, the people, without being held responsible for that.

In this case, self-criticism is no longer of value. The questions of treason can’t be solved by self-criticism. You can’t solve the betraying of your country through self-criticism.

Cde. Elena Ceaușescu: He who betrays should answer for it.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: We wanted to inform the Executive Political Committee about this problem. We will continue to clarify the matter to the end, based on the confession, because they addressed letters.

It was a good thing that the former underground fighters discussed, because they know the way we worked in the past and they have a fair attitude to the party.

Cde. Coman Ion: With Apostol it is the more serious as before writing the letter he was warned not to get in touch with Brucan, who is a spy in the service of American imperialism. I had called his attention to the fact that he can be punishable by law.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: He came from abroad. He had already been recruited abroad and here he executed what he had been told.

Cde. Elena Ceaușescu: He was recruited abroad long time ago.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: There he became an agent of foreign espionage.

Cde. Elena Ceaușescu: And here he went on with his activity.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: Moreover, when coming to the country, he stopped to England, German Federal Republic.

Cde. Constantin Nicolae: In England he gave an interview to the BBC, on condition that it should be broadcast only after his death.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: In fact, he stopped there in order to be instructed how to carry out his activity.

This is the problem and it means that we really have to adopt a firm position on everything and everybody that break the laws of the country. You have seen the way they acted in Cuba, and even in China, in the case of traitors, as we can't call them otherwise.

It is not about rushing things. Still we need to have a clear position, to draw conclusions and take firm measures.

Cde. Elena Ceaușescu: We must inform the Party.

Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu: That is why I wanted us to inform the Executive Political Committee and, let's see, after 23 August, inform the whole Party.

And now, comrades, we could wind up the meeting, let's do our duty and greet 23 August with best results. There are only a few days left.

All right, with this we wind up the meeting.

- C.H.N.A., *fund C.C. of the R.C.P. –The Office*, dossier no. 56/1989, f. 2-4; 12-13; 17-19.

Note: The documents have been selected and registered in the Archives of the Executive political Committee of the C.C. of the R.C.P. In order to show these details, we used italics.

31st May 1989

Gheorghe Apostol's letter, through which he pleaded for the clemency of the members of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. and of the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

[Handwritten notes:] *IV-4*

The Office of C.C. of the R.C.P.

2193/19.[0]8.1989

Nr. 2382 22.[0]8.1989

The Archives of the Executive Political Committee of the C.C. of the R.C.P.

No. 1341/04.09.1989

To

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY
THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA

The undersigned Gheorghe Apostol, please allow me to submit to your attention the following:

It is my duty to point in all sincerity that I have a large responsibility regarding the letter sent to the West by Silviu Brucan and read in March 1989 on the foreign radio stations, as it was I who organised and attracted other people to this action.

Though I was aware that, through what I had initiated, I would support the foreign propaganda against our country and determine actions of slandering and denigrating the party and the state, I did not hesitate to put my intentions into practice, being driven by personal ambitions and selfish interests.

By what I had done, I placed materials at the disposal of foreign circles and dens of reactionary propaganda, materials which, though without a real basis, supported their hostile actions.

I am aware that through my actions I disregarded my obligations as a Romanian citizen and the laws of the country; I deeply regret everything I did and plead for clemency with the party leadership and the State Council.

Now I fully realize that I had seriously infringed the provisions of the Romanian Communist Party statute offending against the duties of defending the party's unity, of supporting the achievement of its political direction and of showing intransigence towards the actions hostile to our socialist order and towards those who plot against the interests of the people.

Lucidly and responsibly analysing the attitude I had and the deeds I committed, I have come to the conclusion that the negative character traits, the careerist ambitions and the vainglory had brought me to the grievous situation of having placed myself in the employ of those whom I had once fought against.

Being aware that my position and actions have been exploited in an attempt to discredit the party's and state's policy, the socialist regime in our country, I deeply and fully regret the acts I have committed.

I realize that, by what I have done, I also brought great shame on my own past, giving up the ideals to which I had devoted the years of my youth.

As I have already pointed out, I put my own interests above the state's and party's interests and for my personal narrow aims I didn't hesitate to collaborate with elements in the employ of my country's enemies.

My actions were the result of mistaken conceptions and directions, as well as of mentalities foreign to the moral and political portrait I should have had as a party member.

Likewise, without trying to exculpate myself in any way, I admit that during the long period I was away from the country, with a blameworthy levity I was influenced by the external reactionary propaganda, thus renouncing the principles and norms of a communist work and life.

Now I am ashamed that, at my age, I can no longer be dignified in front of my former fight companions, in front of the citizens of the country.

At this moment, being my own judge, I commit myself for the rest of my life to proving complete devotion to the party and the country.

I ask the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and the State Council to give me the opportunity to rehabilitate myself morally and prove that in the future my behaviour will no more offend against the party's and country's interests.

I promise not to undertake anything any longer that might jeopardize the policy of our party and our state, that I shall not have any relations whatsoever with persons that denigrate the country, thus becoming a loyal citizen and taking up a firm position against any attempt of disregarding or breaking the laws of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

I assure that the Central Committee of the party that I totally repudiate the actions I did and for my deeds I apologise to the party, the Romanian people, the party's and state's leadership. At the same time, taking into consideration my advanced age, I ask for clemency.

Yours truly,

Gheorghe Apostol

31.05.1989

- C.H.N.A., *fund C.C. of the R.C.P. – Office*, dossier 56/1989, f. 94-96.

Notes:

1. The document was sealed and registered at The Office of the C.C. of the R.C.P. and the Archives of the Executive Political Committee of the C.C. of the R.C.P. but it does not have Gheorghe Apostol's original signature. In order to show these details we used italics.
2. For details regarding the contents of the letter mentioned by Gheorghe Apostol (known as „The Letter of the Six”), see Silviu Brucan, *A Biography Between Two Revolutions: From Capitalism to Socialism and Back*, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p. 196-203; Pavel Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu, the Years of the Countdown*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2002, p. 287-289.
3. For the surprisingly indulgent methods used by the Securitate officers during the interrogation of Gheorghe Apostol, as a consequence of the interview he had given to a BBC reporter in London in 1988, as well as after the publishing in New York in “The Universe” newspaper (run by Aristide Buhoiu) of an article criticizing Nicolae Ceaușescu's policy, see Liviu Țăranu, *Gheorghe Apostol's “dialogue” with the Securitate (1989)*, in *The Archives of the Securitate 4*, The National Council for Studying the Archives of the Securitate, coordinated by Silviu B. Moldovan, The Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008, p. 649-670.

Bibliography

- Câmpeanu, Pavel, *Ceaușescu The Years of the Countdown*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2002.
- Preda, Gavriil, Opriș, Petre, *România in Warsaw Treaty Organization. Documents (1954-1968)*, volume II, The National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, Bucharest, 2009.
- Jianu, *Gheorghe Apostol and “The Letter of the Six”*, Old Court Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008.
- Opriș, Petre, *Communist, but anti-Ceaușescu: “Pârvulescu Case”*, in “*The Dossiers of History*”, year XI, no. 11 (123)/2006.
- Vlase, Vasile Toma, “*Pârvulescu Incident” at the 12th Congress of the RCP*, in “*The Dossiers of History*”, year XI, no. 2 (114)/2006.
- The 12th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party*, 19-23 November 1979. Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981.
- The Central Historical National Archives (C.H.N.A.). *The fund of the C.C. of the R.C.P. – the Office* – dossier no. 25/1963, 33/1963, 56/1989.