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## THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOTHERAPY IN RUMANIA DURING THE SOCIALIST DICTATORSHIP OF NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU

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The paper tries to provide a history of psychotherapy in Rumania during the socialist dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965–1989). In order to fully understand the peculiarities of the development of psychotherapy in the last decades of the previous century, it is absolutely necessary to take into consideration the deep degradation of the quality of interpersonal relations in Rumania and to analyze the causes that have determined this process. Rumania is the only country in Eastern Europe having as leaders, for 45 years continuously, two Stalinists, both of them with identical political formation, who are remembered for intense ideological activity, misguided zeal and constancy, both becoming dreaded and indisputable leaders, setting up a national-communist dictatorship – Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej – and a personal one – Nicolae Ceaușescu. Under these circumstances, beginning with 1945, the recently founded Rumanian Society for Psychopathology and Psychotherapy disrupted its activity, due to the schisms between members. The Rumanian Academy was abolished, and a new one was set up. One by one, the Popular Rumanian Academy contested Freudism, psychosomatic medicine, and behaviourism. Without being formally forbidden, psychotherapy was incompatible with the primitive Marxism of the era, and this general state of things lasted for quite a long period. The paper presents the efforts of specialists after the '60s, when more papers and books were published that described various types of psychotherapies, familiarising the professionals with the fundamental ideas in psychotherapy; there were also psychiatrists and psychologists with initiatives in the field and the main textbooks published in this period described psychotherapeutic methods. Unfortunately, little attention was paid to psychoanalysis, cognitive therapies, group therapies, family therapies, and psychodrama. Without openly suppressing the practice of psychotherapy, the officials responsible for the health system did not encourage the ones with such initiatives at all, and the academic bodies, with few exceptions, were hostile to various forms of psychotherapy with an emphasis on those of psychoanalytic origin, for which they had cultivated old reflexes of rejection. This state of things explains the amplitude and the vigour of the initiatives breaking out after 1989, accomplishing the modalities for a structured and complete training.

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**Geschichte der Psychotherapie in Rumänien in der Ära der sozialistischen Diktatur von Nicolae Ceaușescu:** Ziel dieses Artikels ist es, den Zustand der Psychotherapie in der Ära der sozialistischen Diktatur von Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965–1989) darzustellen. Um die Charakteristika der psychotherapeutischen Zusammenhänge in den letzten Jahrzehnten des vergangenen Jahrhunderts zu verstehen, müssen notwendigerweise auch die Verzerrungen in den zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen in Rumänien untersucht und deren Ursachen aufgedeckt und analysiert werden. Rumänien ist das einzige Land im Ostblock, in dem 45 Jahre lang nacheinander zwei nach stalinistischen Richtlinien handelnde Machthaber regierten, die ideologisch sehr aktiv waren und mit der Einführung einer national-kommunistischen Diktatur (Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej) bzw. einer Diktatur mit Personenkult (Nicolae Ceaușescu) zu gefürchteten und unanfechtbaren Führern der Partei und des Landes emporwuchsen. Unter diesen Bedingungen ist die Tätigkeit der Gesellschaft für Psychopathologie und Psychotherapie in Rumänien nach 1954 infolge von internen Streitigkeiten notgedrungen in eine Sackgasse geraten, die Rumänische Akademie wurde aufgelöst, die an ihrer Stelle gegründete Rumänische Volksakademie kämpfte gegen die Lehren von Freud und gegen die Ansätze von Psychosomatik und Behaviorismus. Die Psychotherapie wurde zwar nicht explizit verboten, dafür aber als mit den primitiven marxistischen Ideen nicht vereinbar diffamiert. Der Artikel beschreibt die Anstrengungen von Fachleuten in der Zeit nach den 1960er Jahren, dank deren regelmäßig Werke veröffentlicht wurden, die verschiedene Richtungen der Psychotherapie thematisiert und so Fachleute mit den Grundzügen der Psychotherapie vertraut gemacht haben. Es gab Psychologen und Psychiater mit Initiative und Tatkraft. In Fachbüchern, die in den letzten Jahrzehnten der Diktatur erschienen, wurden bereits psychotherapeutische Methoden erörtert, doch Psychoanalyse, kognitive und Gruppentherapien sowie familientherapeutische Methoden wurden an den Rand gedrängt. Die Durchführung von Psychotherapien wurde zwar nicht offen verboten, aber diejenigen, die in diesem Bereich tätig werden wollten, wurden von den Entscheidungsträgern im Gesundheitswesen nicht gerade ermutigt. Auf der anderen Seite stießen die verschiedenen psychotherapeutischen Richtungen – vor allem die der Psychoanalyse, der man mit den gewohnten Verdrängungsreflexen begegnete – in den Foren der Akademie mit wenigen Ausnahmen auf feindseliges Verhalten. Diese Situation kann vielleicht den großen Elan erklären, mit dem sich die neu gegründeten Gruppen und Gesellschaften unterschiedlichster Richtungen nach 1989 in der Realisierung verschiedener Ausbildungen und praktischer Tätigkeiten sowie in der Anerkennung gegliederter Ausbildungen eingebracht haben.

**Schlüsselbegriffe:** Psychotherapie, Rumänien, Kommunismus, Staatssozialismus, Diktatur, Geschichte, Rückblick, helfender Beruf, Ceaușescu, Psychoanalyse

## 1. General historical overview

In order to fully understand what happened with Rumanian psychotherapy during the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965–1989), one must start by understanding the local historical particularities which differed significantly from what was happening in the rest of Europe. Namely, Ceaușescu's personal communist dictatorship continued a long string of dictatorships that had commenced in the interwar period: monarchist dictatorship (1938–1940), National Legionnaire dictatorship (1940–1941), military-

fascist dictatorship (1941–1944), communist dictatorship (1945–1989), culminating in the personal dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu after 1965 (PĂTRĂȘCANU 1970). All dictatorships, with the exception of the monarchist dictatorship, had had a negative effect on humanist and liberal professions, as well as on the level of intellectual debate, regardless of the field of activity.

The military-fascist dictatorship, by promoting racial laws, had its own particular contribution because many of those who practiced psychiatry and psychotherapy were Jewish. Therefore psychoanalysis, which had until that point been considered a perfectly acceptable method from a medical point of view, was very quickly identified as a Jewish invention that should not be validated any longer. ‘Freud’s theories, are Semite in their essence and applicable only to patients or for Jews, whose psychological nature and physical structure are characterised by a morbid sexuality’ (TOROUȚIU 1936, 58, our trans.).<sup>1</sup> Many Jewish doctors emigrated during this period.

A real social catastrophe happened in Rumania after the end of the war, with inestimable psychological effects on population and professionals alike. Incompetence and improvisation became the main criteria for promotion. Independent professionals and competence were not necessary in the new system, only docile servants. People who had previously been recognised as superior professionals suffered indictment, being characterised in the Soviet style as elitist, noble, distinguished, well-bred, values that have not regained their lost prestige even today (BENTOIU 2007).

In the period between 1948–1989 the number of political prisoners was more than 1,131,000, with a minimum detention period of two years, and more than 500,000 died in prisons and camps due to the living conditions in those places (BOLDUR-LĂȚESCU 2006).

A society with three social strata was progressively structured. The leaders constituted the first – the ‘less free’, almost hermetically isolated from the rest of society, with very special privileges (residential districts, special food and clothes stores, schools, hospitals, etc.), with disproportionate revenues in comparison with the rest of the population; in this way they were more easily defended but also controlled. They were also a model for those ambitious people who hoped to belong to this category. But inside this group there was a gloomy equality, no one was exempt from supervision, no one was above the orders of Number One, also subordinated to the Soviet leaders. No one was safe and any act of independence could have the most dramatic consequences, up to physical elimination, i.e. Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu.

Then came the great mass of people who did not get involved and who were not rebels either, manifesting a docility determined by the desire to survive – a mixture of persons, not only those who had lost their privileges, but also simple merchants, craftsmen, officials, those with liberal professions. This group also included people who previously were very poor and for whom having a stable job, the conditions of

<sup>1</sup> Original text: ‘Teoriile lui Freud, semite în fondul lor și aplicabile numai la bolnavi sau la semiți care prin fire și prin înșăși structura lor fizică sunt de o sexualitate bolnăvicioasă.’

equal distribution of poverty, a room in a block of flats with warm water and heating, the possibility to become literate – all these aspects were quite satisfactory, much better than the prospect of dreaded prisons.

Thus a kind of complicity was created between masses and leaders, the former having a strange mixture of feelings for the latter, including resignation and fear too, of course, but more than that, a deep and unconfessed gratitude for those who succeed to maintain, due to their effort, such a comfortable equity between each person and the most brilliant one known. For many people, the superiority (the high performance) of someone else is not a subject of admiration and enjoyment, but could provoke humiliation in a greater measure than poverty.

The leaders instead ensured that their privileges and ‘conquests’ would become permanent and any favours were not only deserved by them but would also have to be offered with maximum respect. In a society of obedient people and masters, the most dynamic persons decided to fight to succeed and enter the group of leaders, choosing one of the possibilities offered by the system; for instance a lot of young people considered it a success to be selected by Securitate.

Finally, the third stratum was formed by the real or suspected opponents who had no rights at all; they were branded thieves, bastards, and they were left to die from hunger and cold while no one took any notice. Their families’ complaints remained unanswered. After the period when they were imprisoned in forced labour camps, they did not receive any exit documents or even identity cards; they were *nobodies*. These people were subject to permanent surveillance by the Securitate which brutally intervened in all aspects of everyday life of those followed.

For the others, Securitate control was annoying to a certain extent, but if they decided in the very depths of their souls not to think in any other way than was allowed by the system, they did not risk anything. This decision was not considered as resignation, but only as a commonsense attitude, and if they were obedient, the constant surveillance by the police could only have positive effects in the forms of safety in the streets, order, and an absence of drugs (BENTOIU 2009). The majority was content with the little they received. How many persons suffered for the lack of liberty? How many of them would really know what to do with liberty? Any person’s brain will get numbed by the sweet ankylosis of lack of responsibility. Violence characterised the system not only in its initial stages; it remained a permanent distinctive feature, necessary to restrain imagination, spontaneity and the force of original creation that continues to exist in each human being and is reborn with each new generation.

## **2. The state of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in light of Marxist ideology**

This ideology systematically used lies at the intellectual level and hate and envy at the emotional level. How could psychotherapy be conceived under these circumstances? The debate around psychotherapy and psychoanalysis gradually received

an ideological tone, schisms occurring among members of the newly established Rumanian Society of Psychopathology and Psychotherapy. In 1948 an article on the social etiology of neurosis signed by Dr. Egon WEIGEL was published. Directly or indirectly, a sign of equality between psychoanalysis and reactionary concepts became increasingly evident.

As Vasile D. ZAMFIRESCU noted:

Among all the disciplines rejected by communist ideology, only psychoanalysis remained marginalised until the last moments of the existence of communism. No other victims of ideological conviction – genetics, sociology, ‘idealistic’ philosophy – were banished with such consistency and for so long as psychoanalysis. The vehemence with which these were convicted came from the resentful rejection of everything that came from the past and had defined the *bourgeois* age. *Proletcultism*, the last big cultural product of its resentful kind, had produced a clear reversal of values. (2003, 39, our trans.)<sup>2</sup>

The character of opposition between communist ideology and psychoanalysis lies in the fact that psychoanalysis focuses on individuality while communism professes that individual wellbeing is an automatic consequence of general wellbeing. For this reason, psychoanalysis was rejected by the totalitarian regime, and so were all philosophical orientations interested mainly in the individual and only secondarily in society.

Another aspect concerning the autonomy of the person: psychoanalysis is a theory, the subject of which is the individual who enjoys much independence. His status as a well-adjusted bourgeois in capitalism allows him to be independent. In the totalitarian world this personal autonomy is continuously assaulted, invaded, and limited (CLIT 2004, 93). Both the medical world and the psychiatric milieu continued to have an extremely reserved attitude towards psychoanalysis and psychiatry, and the political factor began to play an increasingly important role.

During the dark decade of 1950–1960, the Academy of Medical Sciences combat-ed one by one Freudism, psychosomatic medicine, and behaviourism (Academia R.P.R. 1953). The three parents of Rumanian psychiatry – Obregia, Tomescu and Urechia – were in that period simply tagged as adepts of idealistic and reactionary ideas, represented by the duality of body-soul, Freudism and the psycho-morphological thesis.

Perhaps nowhere else but in Rumania could one have encountered in psychiatry lectures phrases such as ‘the conservative position of individual psychology becomes apparent especially in the therapeutic attitude advocated by it – an attitude of adjustment to the existent social environment, which means conformism and restrain from rebellion or outrage against the injustice of the bourgeois society’, or ‘psychoanalysis represents the reflux of the parasitic life of the bourgeoisie masked

<sup>2</sup> Original text: ‘Dintre toate disciplinele respinse de ideologia comunistă, doar psihanaliza a rămas marginalizată până în ultimele momente de existență a comunismului. Nici genetica, nici sociologia, nici filosofia «idealistică» – celelalte victime ale condamnărilor ideologice, nu au făcut obiectul unei atât de consecvente și îndelungate ostracizări. Înverșunarea cu care au fost condamnate provine din respingerea resentimentară a tot ceea ce venea din trecut și definea evul «burghez». Proletcultismul, ca ultim mare produs cultural de tip resentimentar, precedează la o hotărâta inversare a valorilor.’

in the costume of science' (MULLER 1950, 21, our trans.).<sup>3</sup> The person who wrote these words was neither more nor less than a colleague of the well-known psychologist A.R. Luria; he left the country and he founded a modern laboratory of neuro-linguistics in the Democratic Republic of Germany. In Rumania he was dismissed from his university chair, because he did not sufficiently criticise himself, especially concerning Freudian errors of his youth.

In 1955, one of the most famous personalities in Rumanian medicine stated that 'the discovery of experimental neurosis on dogs has opened endless opportunities for researchers to deepen our knowledge in the field of human neuroses' (KREINDLER 1955, 247–48, our trans.).<sup>4</sup> Under these circumstances it soon became obvious for everyone that any kind of discussion about psychotherapy was futile. Nevertheless, even the Head of the Psychology Department of the Academy wrote one chapter entitled *Psychoanalysis in the United States: The Amoral Aspects of Psychology and the Phase of Putrefaction of Capitalism* (RALEA 1954).

In the medical books and papers of the time, one could read many bizarre ideas, such as the following: in the book *Neurosis with the Dominance of Cardiac Symptoms* (1956) the authors recommended psychotherapy among the treatments; although they considered it to be of crucial importance especially in the cenestopathic forms of asthenic neurosis, the same authors stated that psychotherapy requires the patient to understand his disease, and emphasised: 'The correct spreading of Pavlovian ideas regarding pathophysiology of higher nervous activity is a powerful factor for a rational psychotherapy of neurosis' (ENESCU et al. 1956, 66, our trans.).<sup>5</sup>

Without being formally banned, psychotherapy, considered to be idealistic, was intolerable for the primitive Marxism of the era. It is clear that throughout the Communist era the psychotherapy training process was virtually prohibited by either making any contact with foreign specialists impossible or censoring written information by all means (TEODORESCU 2001).

As this isolated group was not concerned by gathering a large number of followers, Rumanian psychoanalysts were not in real danger from the regime at that time. Fearing contention, the regime was more interested in other larger organised groups, posing a greater risk of a potential increase in their membership. This danger was perceived to be even bigger if these members included persons who had key positions in the *nomenklatura*. This was hardly the case with psychoanalysis or other psychotherapists. 'The communist regime had the force and the science to impose

<sup>3</sup> Original text: '[P]oziția conservatoare, de clasă, a psihologiei individuale reiese mai cu seamă din atitudinea terapeutică pe care aceasta o preconizează – o atitudine de adaptare la mediul social existent ceea ce înseamnă îndeplinirea la conformism și abținere de la răzvrătire sau de la indignarea împotriva nedreptăților societății burgheze' și 'psihanaliza este refluxul vieții parazitare a burgheziei îmbrăcat într-o haină științifică.'

<sup>4</sup> Original text: '[D]escoperirea nevrozelor experimentale ale câinelui a fost cea care a deschis cercetătorilor perspective nemăsurate pentru adâncirea cunoștințelor noastre în domeniul nevrozelor omului.'

<sup>5</sup> Original text: 'propagarea corectă a ideilor fiziopatologiei pavloviste a activității nervoase superioare constituie un puternic factor de psihoterapie rațională a nevrozelor'.

itself entirely, to beat most of the resistance and to install its fundamental features' (CLIT 2004, 94, our trans.).<sup>6</sup>

Among these features a special position was occupied by the illusion of omnipotence. Actually, as Freud noticed, the basis for this illusion of omnipotence is rather a feeling of failure with deep roots. The totalitarian regime, like an enormous sandcastle always in need of reinforcement, is destined for a sudden collapse when threatened by bigger waves.

After 1970, a phenomenon occurred that had some favourable consequences; although the relaxation and the opening of the first years of Ceaușescu's regime began to disappear, the regime that was excessively fanatical and repressive during 1948–1960 due to a fear of deviation and counterrevolution, became more pragmatic. The regime found that the 'counter-revolutions' of Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia did not awaken any interest in the West, and the protesters were not too dangerous with their intellectual allegations, and so it turned to maintain power and privileges. Therefore such a practice as psychotherapy, in any of its forms, especially psychoanalysis, could not have a mass character and was not dangerous. Without making it official, the regime stopped banning it and classified it in a grey area where, at any time, the scarecrow of illegality could be reinforced.

### 3. Major figures in psychotherapy, their work and fate in the '60s and '70s

Isolated attempts to introduce psychotherapies were made in Cluj by Johny Bîlcea – hypnosis and autogenic training – and by Iuliu Albini – hypnosis and *rêve-éveillé*. Both therapists left Romania.

A particular case was that of the psychiatrist Dan Arthur (1923–1969), who worked from 1960 in the Săvârșin Sanatorium of Neurosis and then in the Gătaia Hospital. He was a great promoter of psychotherapy, teaching 'psychodrama technique, logotherapy, Jungian psychotherapy and Schultz relaxation training' (OLARU 1981, 524, our trans.).<sup>7</sup> Among other things, Dan ARTHUR said 'to try psychotherapy – especially psychoanalysis, in patients with simplistic mentality equals the absurdity of challenging the impossible' (1972, 13, our trans.).<sup>8</sup>

The doctor made courses and summaries for the group of resident doctors he worked with at Săvârșin and then Gătaia. We can argue that this was the first organised attempt to train psychotherapists. The group of doctors trained at Gătaia would later become the most progressive core and most open to the therapeutic approaches

<sup>6</sup> Original text: '[R]egimul comunist . . . a avut forța și știința de a se impune peste tot, de a înfrânge cea mai mare parte a rezistențelor și de a-și instala caracteristicile fundamentale.'

<sup>7</sup> Original text: '[A] inițiat pe mulți în tehnica psihodramei, logoterapiei, psihoterapiei jungiene și antrenamentul Schultz.'

<sup>8</sup> Original text: '[A] încerca psihoterapia – și mai ales psihanaliza la bolnavii cu mentalitate simplistă echivalează cu bravarea imposibilului.'

of the time. Unfortunately, the research made by one of our colleagues – Mihai Ardelean – on the cooperation of the psychiatrists with the organs of repression revealed that at least one of the students of Dan Arthur was recruited by Securitate in order to regularly report all ‘progress’ made in psychotherapy.

In the years following the ’60s, there were a series of works that begun to speak clearly about psychotherapy, familiarising a greater number of psychiatrists and psychologists with basic ideas related to this kind of therapy: *Introducere critic în psihanaliză* (‘Critical Introduction to Psychoanalysis’) by Victor SĂHLEANU and Ion POPESCU-SIBIU (1972), *Introducere în psihoterapie* (‘Introduction to Psychotherapy’) by Ion VIANU (1975), *Ce este psihanaliza?* (‘What is Psychoanalysis’) by Aurel DICU (1977). On the eve of the ’80s there was still massive reluctance towards the methods derived from psychoanalytic psychotherapy. One of the more conservative professors of psychiatry from Iași allocated over 20 pages to hypnosis and relaxation methods, and only 3 pages to analytical psychotherapy and to psychoanalysis and narcoanalysis (BRÂNZEI 1979).

It has to be noted that a great number of specialists, physicians and psychologists, Jews and Germans, left the country in the ’50s and ’60s. In this way the number of competent specialists decreased significantly, the more so as these were in a more important contact with information resources from the West.

A particular case is that of psychologist Vladimir Aristo Gheorghiu, who was moving between Germany and Rumania at the time. In 1973 he decided to return to Rumania although he was a professor at Mainz, where he also received his PhD for a thesis on hypnosis. He became a true advocate of this method, which he accredited as an extremely effective psychotherapy for most diverse psychosomatic disorders (GHEORGHIU 1977). In 1983 he was again forced to leave Rumania after the Transcendental Meditation scandal.

The psychoanalysts’ group in Bucharest was formed by Eugene Papadima’s students. He was the pupil of Ion Popescu Sibiu, and he practiced from 1972–1988 in Rumania, and then emigrated to the United States. Eugen Papadima returned to the country in 1995. Between 1972 and 1978 he gave lectures on psychoanalysis, and in 1978 he was requested by the Bucharest Health Directorate to give courses in a psychotherapy training program for health professionals. He was the one to initiate the Rumanian psychoanalytical movement and give a major boost to psychotherapy. Among those trained by him are Nadia Bujor, Radu Clit, Irene Talaban, Vera Șandor and Vasile D. Zamfirescu, who practiced in various medical facilities like the Obregia Hospital, the Fundeni Hospital, and the Students’ Hospital (SCORUȘ 2007). It is interesting to know that one of the therapists had a direct family connection with the Ceaușescu family. There were rumours, after the demise of the College of Psychology (1979), that this happened at the express orders of the dictator, extremely irritated that a close relative of his was involved in the practice of psychoanalysis.



#### 4. Subjective experiences of psychotherapists

A few years after he emigrated from Rumania, Ion VIANU wrote in a magazine: ‘Our country is a white spot, a phenomenon that might interest a historian of European culture who is eager to discover the reasons which made our civil liberties more limited than elsewhere’ (1980, 25, our trans.).<sup>9</sup>

The same author says: ‘We were very isolated. I learned about Eugen Papadima’s efforts after he had left the country, though his person was known to me. Everything was happening as if we were some guys who “conspired” against the official ideology’ (SCORUŞ 2007, 29). I. Vianu and E. Papadima practiced a ‘wild’ psychoanalysis, acting isolated and by themselves ‘as if we were building a homemade bomb’ (30, our trans).<sup>10</sup>

Irene TALABAN gave an interview to the review Psihiatru.ro, where she synthesised the experience she had during communism:

To practice psychoanalysis in a closed and opaque system, as the communist system was, is an original choice in the best scenario if not a sign of madness at worst. Actually, to attempt to pass an exam at the Faculty of Psychology in Bucharest in 1970 was rather a peculiar thought. I was obviously influenced by a drama teacher, by my own mother, by the history of my mother’s family – many traumatic events experienced by them which I found out about much later. I read Freud for the first time when I was 20, borrowed from Popescu Sibiu. I had chosen psychology out of curiosity and psychoanalysis for the very same reason. I practiced psychoanalysis in conditions that prohibited any liberal profession and considered the Freudian theory to be . . . bourgeois. I don’t have a clue about what Securitate did or didn’t know about my choices, but I have always told myself that I wasn’t such an important and public character to be noticed by them along with others like me who had the idea to mix in things that were not well-viewed. For all of our group psychotherapy was a challenge into deep, intelligent and complex searches for meanings. In other words, psychotherapy helped us think in a world where the process of thinking could be attacked at any moment by the communist system. Psychotherapy ‘forced us’ to use a vivid language in spite of the wooden language used everywhere and by everyone. There were many who asked me how it was even possible to practice psychotherapy at that time. It just was . . . as any other endeavour in an authentic, hard search, with many doubts but also with courage, a worthy and fulfilling experience. Some people made theatre, others invented chess problems, others wrote books, and others worked in the gardens. We also attended an Astrology Circle (another entirely forbidden field) organised by Professor Singeorzan. All these people, not indulged by the ‘system’, some knowing one another, some in total anonymity represented, like once Koestler said, the triumph of the human substance over an environment that lacked humanity. The psychotherapists and psychiatrists have been gathering in smaller or larger groups to talk, to debate different theories, to argue over some clinical case, sometimes to

<sup>9</sup> Original text: ‘[T]ara noastră reprezintă o pată aproape albă, fenomen care ar putea să intereseze pe un istoric al culturii europene, dornic să descopere motivele pentru care la noi libertățile cetățenești sunt mai limitate ca în alte părți.’

<sup>10</sup> Original text: ‘Eram foarte izolați. Am aflat despre strădaniile lui Eugen Papadima după ce a plecat din țară, deși persoana lui mi-era cunoscută. Totul se petrecea ca și cum am fi fost niște inși care „unelteau” împotriva ideologiei oficiale’; ‘de parcă am fi construit o bombă de buzunar’.

dispute different topics, but in the end, to express ourselves as free minds. But is it possible to be free in a jail? Steinhardt said in his Journal that it is because nobody could think every second that he was going to be arrested the next second. I don't know what would have happened if the system had resisted another 20 years. Personally, I was neither expecting the regime to fall nor was I wondering what would happen in the next hundred years of the communist system. The psychotherapist is not a philosopher but a creative artist. From this perspective, he is not concerned about Eternity but about the well-done thing. I believe that our activity as psychotherapists in a derisory Rumania was a prolific effort, a kind of research on uncharted territories, an ongoing theoretical discovery. But the special thing about our activity was that we declined the 'wooden language'! (2011, 24, our trans.)<sup>11</sup>

## 5. Psychotherapeutic literature

VIANU (1975) spoke about psychoanalysis in a favourable way in the book 'Introduction to Psychotherapy'. Even the general scheme of the book is psychoanalytical. But the feeling of not being followed is not an encouraging one. Although the work was intensively read and even cited, there was no review and after the author left Rumania in 1977 there were no other reprinted editions or prolonged circulation of the book.

<sup>11</sup> Original text: 'A practica psihanaliza într-un sistem închis, opac, precum sistemul totalitar comunist este, în cel mai bun caz, o alegere originală, în cel mai rău, o țicneală. De altfel, a te duce să dai examen la facultatea de psihologie din București, în anul 1970, e un gând năstrușnic. Evident, am fost influențată . . . de o profesoară de teatru, de propria mea mamă, de periplusul familiei mele materne, de diversele drame trăite de ai mei (pe care le-am aflat, de altfel, foarte târziu). Așadar am citit primele texte de Freud la 20 de ani, mi le-a împrumutat Popescu-Sibiu. Alesesem psihologia din curiozitate, psihanaliza din aceeași curiozitate, ceva mai ascuțită, mai . . . formată și am practicat în condițiile în care orice practică liberală era prohibită iar teoria lui Freud, considerată . . . burgheză, nu avea drept de apel în cetate. Nu știi ce știa sau nu știa Securitatea și mi-am zis totdeauna că eu nu eram un personaj atât de important, public, ca să se ocupe ei de mine – de noi, câțiva, care avuseserăm ideea de a ne vâri în treburi nu tocmai curate. Pentru noi, atunci, psihoterapia obliga la căutări complexe, inteligente, la construcții de sensuri, pe scurt la o activitate de gândire într-o lume în care gândirea era atacată de sistem prin toate mijloacele. Ne obligă la o limbă vie, în pofida limbii de lemn ce se strecura în toate propozițiile, la toate nivelurile. Mulți m-au întrebat cum a fost posibil să practicăm psihoterapia, atunci. A fost posibilă, pur și simplu, ca orice muncă de căutare, autentică, spinoasă, sub semnul îndoielii și al îndrăznelii deopotrivă, o muncă aducătoare de bucurie. Alții au făcut teatru, alții au inventat probleme de șah, alții au scris cărți, alții și-au lucrat grădinile. Mergeam, în paralel, la un Cerc de Astrologie, al profesorului Sîngeorzan (alt domeniu interzis cu desăvârșire). Toți acești oameni, marginali în raport cu sistemul, anonimi, unii cunoscându-se între ei, alții nu, reprezentau, cum zicea Koestler, triumful substanței umane asupra unui mediu dezumanizant. Noi, psihoterapeuții, psihanaliztii, ne întâlneam când și când, în grupuri mai mari sau mai mici, discutăm diverse teorii, discutăm secvențe clinice din terapiile cu pacienții . . . ne contraziceam, argumentam, ne enervam, mă rog, ne comportam liber. E posibil să fi liber într-o închisoare? Este, spunea Steinhardt în Jurnalul său. Pentru că nimeni nu se poate gândi, în fiecare secundă, în mod continuu, că în secunda următoare va fi arestat. Nu știi ce s-ar fi întâmplat dacă sistemul ar fi durat încă 20 de ani. Personal, nu mă așteptam să cadă – dar nici nu m-am întrebat, serios, ce se va petrece în următorii o sută de ani ai acestui sistem. Psihoterapeutul nu este un filozof ci un artizan creator – în această calitate, el nu își pune problema eternității ci a lucrului bine făcut. Și cred că activitatea noastră de terapeuți într-o Românie derizorie a fost o activitate fecundă, un soi de cercetare pe teren nedefrișat, de descoperire teoretică în mers. Și mai ales noi nu am lucrat, atunci, în limba de lemn!'

'The Textbook of Psychiatry' was written in 1976, under the redaction of Prof. Vasile PREDESCU. The chapter dedicated to psycho-socio-therapies is 54 pages out of a total of 1,150 pages, as follows: individual psychotherapy – 3.5 pages, activating psychotherapies – 8 pages, psychotherapy under barbiturate narcosis – 6 pages, suggestive psychotherapy – 9 pages, psychoanalysis – 2 pages, group psychotherapy – 8 pages, occupational therapy – 5 pages, sociotherapy – 6 pages.

Most of the approximately 1,000 trained psychiatrists from the 1972–1990 period had as a fundamental guide the broad collective work published by the Bucharest Department of Psychiatry. Around this time, in Timișoara, Mircea Lăzărescu led a doctoral thesis on speech therapy (Ch. Furnică). After 1990, this psychiatrist with many concerns in psychotherapy became the president of The Society of Existential Analysis and Speech Therapy.

The 'Vademecum of Psychiatry' (1985), the first paper that refers extensively to the new guidelines generated by the emergence of psychiatry DSM-III, presented in a comprehensive and balanced way the main trends in psychotherapy. Freud's first writings were published in Hungarian translation (S. Ferenczi, J. Lengyel and Z. Partos) in Bucharest, including papers from 1910 (lectures on psychoanalysis), 1932 (new lectures on psychoanalysis) and an excerpt from *Totem and Taboo* (FREUD 1918). There is a belief according to which the book entitled *Pszichoanalizis* [Psychoanalysis] by S. FREUD (1977) published by Kriterion in Hungarian also paved the way for the first Rumanian translations from 1980.

The book *Psihologie clinică* ('Clinical Psychology') that was released in 1985, prepared by a team appointed by the Academy under the coordination of G. Ionescu, has a chapter dedicated to psychotherapy with three sections: psychoanalytical psychotherapy (author: E. Papadima), family psychotherapy (author: A. Ionescu) and counselling (author: M. Bejat). The chapter presented psychotherapy in a positive light with the authority only a work of such a grand scale, published by the Academy of Social and Political Sciences of the Socialist Republic of Rumania, could warrant. Still, times seemed to be changing. In 1990 the two younger authors of this chapter left Rumania for the Western world (IONESCU et al. 1985).

An event with real significance was the emergence of the first three volumes, between the years 1987–1989, of 'The Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Psychiatry', (GORGOS et al. 1987–1992), a work in which a group of young psychiatrists and psychologists reviewed without prejudice and inhibition the fundamental concepts of therapies, adopting a very open attitude, similar to the Western publications of the time. An important fact is that three of the authors directly practiced psychotherapy: Teofil Andriescu – behavioural therapy, Veronica Șandor and Irena Talaban – psychoanalysis. Some of the authors of the book went on to become leaders of opinion after the 1989 revolution in post-Communist Rumania.

The 'Rumanian Review of Psychotherapy' has been in existence since 1998, and published biannually; as an undoubted recognition, in 2010 the Rumanian Association of Psychiatry changed its name to Rumanian Association of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy.

## 6. Psychotherapeutic care

It can be said that psychotherapy was recognised in the seventies as a possible therapy but without any real practitioners and without a formal recognition or a structured way of training and learning the best-known techniques. A number of people are recognised in this area – Constantin Oancea in child and adolescent psychotherapy, or Radu RICMAN, director of the Gătaia Hospital from the '80s, where they began to organise psychotherapy seminars that received considerable interest. The Gătaia Hospital hosted, in 1986, the first edition of the seminar of psychotherapy, during which the National Society for Psychotherapy was founded. The themes were: suggestive psychotherapy, cognitive psychotherapy, child psychotherapy; meetings that begun at Gătaia represented the first real forum of debate on issues of psychotherapy practices in Rumania (1997).

The most spectacular political-legal staging of the eighties occurred in 1982, the so-called business of transcendental meditation. A dark story which had a significant impact on intellectuality, but especially on psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy practices. How did it happen? The Secret Police (Securitate) supervised the work of a French citizen of Rumanian origin, NS, who came to Rumania, paradoxically, at the invitation of the Ministry of Education. He proposed a neuropsychological rehabilitation program, specifically a neuropsychological relaxation technique, applicable especially in stress-related situations or in states following special mental effort, called transcendental meditation.

For reasons hard to explain, at some point the government's attitude became very reluctant to the guest's practices, and all those who attended the presentations and open meetings were investigated, excluded from the Communist Party, fired from their jobs or professionally demoted. The Institutes of Psychology and Education were abolished. Among those punished were academia members, university professors, doctors, psychologists, writers (including the famous Marin Sorescu) and lawyers. But let us see the list as written by the hand of the omnipresent Securitate of the professional structure found to have come into contact with transcendental meditation: 87 engineers, 31 architects, 2 historians, 12 artists, 13 economists, 24 doctors, 45 teachers, 25 psychologists, 9 lawyers, 45 mathematicians, 4 biologists, 4 journalists, 3 writers, 11 lyrical artists, 3 actors, 2 priests, 31 technicians, 9 clerks, 1 worker, 21 college students and 23 high-school students. The apparent rigor of paranoid Securitate workers must be noted, and also the fact that absolutely all meetings of the movement were reported, recorded and analyzed (JELA et al. 2004). This intervention of the party's brutal Securitate sparked fear, anxiety and confusion in the whole society but especially in those who practiced psychoanalysis.

There were of course people who strongly opposed any form of psychotherapy, maintaining that it was not a solution to mental illness. 'One of the Bucharest leaders of psychiatry in the '80s discouraged his interns by posing an ironic question: Can you show me a schizophrenic healed by psychotherapy?' (TEODORESCU 2001,

127.)<sup>12</sup> Others invented ‘therapeutic’ methods as rehabilitation, considered as a resocialisation therapy, which were rooted directly in the dialectical materialist conception; according to its author, resocialisation meant highlighting the socio-economic dimension of the mentally ill. The personality traits had to be addressed not by psychiatric criteria but by sociological, political and economical ones. In this regard, the psychiatric facility had to be transformed into an institution that simulated the normalcy from a social perspective. It should not be perceived as a bizarre scene and the group discussions should be healthy, ‘we cannot do it à la Moreno, promoting hallucinatory psychodrama’ (ROMILĂ 2004, 556, our trans.).<sup>13</sup> This scheduled work therapy and full control over the inpatient/outpatient’s program fit perfectly with the communist ideology and social practice of the time, where everything depended on the will of another and where they would decide whether or not you conformed to the certificate of normalcy.

Instead of conclusions, we can say the following: psychotherapy was not a well-viewed practice under the dictatorship, and the number of doctors and psychologists who were more or less qualified for this practice was insignificant (BRĂTESCU 1994). Without openly suppressing the practice of psychotherapy, the officials responsible for the healthcare system did not encourage the ones with such initiatives at all, and the academic bodies, with few exceptions, were hostile to various forms of psychotherapy with an emphasis on those with psychoanalytic origins, for which they had cultivated old reflexes of rejection. Therefore, isolated psychotherapists or small professional groups were not considered a major threat by the communist regime. There was a situation like that described by Arthur KOESTLER while he was travelling in the Soviet Union in 1934: teachers gave private lessons, physicians consulted patients in their homes and so many people did their jobs very well but illegally (1994, 444). All these individuals were not protected by anybody assuming all these risks.

After 1989, the temptation for psychotherapy was amazing and a real rebound occurred; in 1995 there were already 7 associations or societies representing different modalities of psychotherapy – psychoanalytic, psychodrama, somatotherapy, hypnosis and suggestion, logotherapy and existential analysis, Balint psychotherapy – that formed the first national association of psychotherapy, and in 2001 there were already 12 national associations of psychotherapy (BOTEZAT-ANTONESCU 2004).

## 7. Major figures in psychotherapy, their work and fate in the ’80s and ’90s

A special interest in psychosomatic disease psychotherapy was shown by Alfred Dumitrescu, and in relaxation therapies by Irina Holdevici, author of over 20 books in the field. They would be joined by Radu Clit from Fundeni Hospital and Alexei

<sup>12</sup> Original text: ‘[U]n din liderii psihiatriei bucureștene din anii 80 își descuraja secundarii cu întrebarea ce se voia ironică: îmi puteți arăta un schizofrenic vindecat prin psihoterapie?’

<sup>13</sup> Original text: ‘nu putem face à la Moreno, să facem psihodramă halucinatorie’.

Florescu from Bucharest Emergency Hospital. After 1990 Radu Clit focused more on psychoanalysis, settling down in France permanently.

Nadia Bujor also began her career at Fundeni Hospital, and later replaced Eugen Papadima at the Students Hospital as a psychologist and psychotherapist. In the mid-'80s Vera Șandor also started as a psychoanalyst, until then being particularly interested in psychotherapy of children and adolescents. She states:

Psychoanalysis was an isolated practice, exercised almost exclusively in the psychiatric environment, without possibility of becoming an ideological and mass phenomenon . . . I don't believe we were practicing an ordinary form of denying the danger, I rather think we felt this ambiguous guilt in which we all were living and that served the totalitarian regime. You can easily subdue people who feel slightly guilty and anxious. (SCORUȘ 2007, 176, our trans.)<sup>14</sup>

Practicing psychoanalytic psychotherapy according to this psychotherapist meant that they were doing their jobs in an authentic and not in a forged routine manner. In 1994 Vera Șandor became the first Rumanian psychotherapist recognised by the IPA. From an official point of view the Rumanian psychoanalysts did not exist because their group was not registered by the International Psychoanalytic Association. In his presentation from 1992 at the Freudian Group in Paris, a Rumanian psychoanalyst noted:

[S]uch a registration would have endangered our existence . . . However, they probably would not have shot us for this, being already in 1970, when the Western world finally started to survey and to penalise, according to its possibilities, the totalitarian abuses of the so-called 'socialist countries'. There was still the risk that our professional life . . . would be forbidden. The proof . . . for this kind of danger is the history of . . . 'transcendental meditation' from 1982 when the intellectuals caught *in flagrante delicto* attending these meetings were 'punished', being sent to 'blue collar' work, being forced to earn their existence as unqualified people. (PAPADIMA 2002, 175, our trans.)<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Original text: 'Psihanaliza era o practică izolată exersată aproape exclusive în mediul psihiatric, fără potențial de transformare în fenomen ideologic și cultural de masă . . . Nu cred că noi practicam o formă banală de negare a primejdiei. Cred mai degrabă că simțeam că această difuză culpabilitate în care trăiam toți servea regimului totalitar. Îi supui mai ușor pe oamenii vag culpabili și anxioși.'

<sup>15</sup> Original text: '(O) astfel de înregistrare ne-ar fi pus în pericol existența noastră . . . Probabil că nu ne-ar fi împușcat pentru aceasta – eram totuși în 1970 și lumea occidentală începuse, în sfârșit, să supravegheze și să sancționeze, în limita posibilităților pe care le avea, abuzurile totalitare din așa zisele „țări socialiste”. Există însă riscul ca funcționarea noastră profesională . . . să fie interzisă. Dovada . . . o constituie istoria . . . cu „meditația transcendentă” din 1982, când intelectualii care au fost „prinși” în flagrant delict de participare la această practică au fost „pedepsiți” prin trimiterea la „munca de jos”, fiind obligați să-și câștige existența ca muncitori necalificați.'

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