

**OFFICIALIZING THE PAST - AN ANALYSIS OF  
THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION FOR THE  
ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP IN  
ROMANIA**

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## **Abstract**

This work puts forward an analysis of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Romanian Communist Dictatorship. Relying on a broadened understanding of the field of historical production, I try to identify and explain the mentions and silences which constitute a historical narrative and the relationship in which this stands to an act of official nomination. I argue that the imposition of schemes of classifying the past functions so as to reproduce and legitimize existing relations, while disconnecting the past from the possibility of plural structurations. A particular view on the past sanctioned in the official narrative takes the appearance of a singular one, and as such functions to naturalize a contingent social relationship and its reflection in a form of remembering as a necessary one.

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## **List of abbreviations**

AC – Alianța Civică (The Civic Alliance)

CNSAS – Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității (The National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives)

AFDPR – Asociația Foștilor Deținuți Politici din România (The Association of the Former Romanian Political Detainees)

CPADCR – Comisia Prezidențială pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România (The Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania)

CDR – Convenția Democrată Română (The Romanian Democratic Convention)

FSN – Frontul Salvării Naționale (National Salvation Front)

GDS – Grupul pentru Dialog Social (The Group for Social Dialogue)

IICCR – Institutul de Investigare a Crimelor Comunismului (The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes)

IICCMER – Institutul de Investigare a Crimelor Comunismului și Memoria Exilului Românesc (The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of Romanian Exile)

ISP – Institutul de Studii Populare (The Institute for Popular Studies)

PD – Partidul Democrat (The Democratic Party)

PD-L – Partidul Democrat Liberal (The Democratic Liberal Party)

PNL – Partidul Național Liberal

PRM – Partidul România Mare (Greater Romania Party)

PSD – Partidul Social Democrat (Social Democratic Party)

## Introduction

“The Tismăneanu Report is the document that ended communism, when I presented it in the Parliament” (Popescu 2009), a statement attributed to Romania’s current president, Traian Băsescu, captures the official view on the way in which breaking with the socialist regime has been achieved. In April 2006 the Presidential Commission for the Investigation of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania (Comisia Prezidențială pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România, further referred to as CPADCR) was set up. CPADCR was meant to provide the president, in the form of a report, the irrefutable evidence on the basis of which he could meet the recurrent demands to condemn the communist regime, demands in turns formulated by a number of the most visible Romanian anticommunist activists and public intellectuals. On the 18th of December 2006, following the *Final Report* of CPADCR the president issued an official statement in front of the Parliament in which he declared the Romanian communist regime to have been illegitimate and criminal. The act of condemnation itself was met with protests and the event took a burlesque turn as members of the extreme right wing party, Partidul România Mare (The Greater Romania Party, further referred to as PRM) broke the formal code of the meeting with violent verbal outbursts. The event received a broad, but rather short lived media attention, and it was not until 2009 that the theme reemerged, this time on the list of the president’s first mandate achievements. However, the act of condemnation itself occurred alongside the broader agenda of PDL of redefining itself as the legitimate representative of the political right, and the theme of the necessity of breaking with the past has been all throughout this period present in the electoral discourse in the form of the identification of the opposition party PSD as the successor party of the communist power. The narrative of the communist legacy as an explanatory framework for the breakdowns of the capitalist regime has also been one of the main tropes of the political

party in power, thus the broader theme of repudiating the communist past has been present in transmuted forms.

Although CPADCR and its work have been not subjected to thorough public scrutiny, I argue in what follows that the production of the *Final Report* serves as an instrument for the legitimation of a specific view on Romania's past, one which is necessarily exclusionary; moreover, I argue that the work of CPADCR can only be understood in the broader context of the politics of memory in Romania. The central question of my thesis is what kind of mentions and silences does the historical narrative officialized through CPADCR create and reproduce and how does the imposition of schemes of classifying the past serve the reproduction of existing relations. In this I rely on Trouillot's understanding of historical narratives as constituted by mentions and silences, where silencing is understood as a practice, or in the author's words: "mentions and silences are [...] active, dialectical counterparts of which history is the synthesis" (Trouillot 1995:48). In order to grasp the mechanisms which make possible the coming into being of historical narratives I complement my analysis with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence, as a means towards understanding the meaning of history as reflected in its purpose (Trouillot 1995:149), or how is that competing claims for legitimacy within different fields rely on historical narratives in order to impose a legitimate view of the social world.

I start off my analysis with situating the problem of selecting a way of dealing with the past within the broader topic of the politics of memory. In this I relate the case of CPADCR to previous research on historical truth commissions and ways of dealing with the legacy of totalitarian or authoritarian regimes, while suggesting that what is needed is a grounding of the work of the Commission within a broadened view of the field of historical production. Reducing the empirical case to a mechanism meant to redress injustices of the past or overstating the independence of the *Final Report* as a written text is misleading, because it

implies disconnecting the production of a historical narrative from its purpose and does not allow for understanding the stakes implied by the very act of favoring a certain form of remembering over others. Through the mediation of an instrument of knowledge, history, in this case, the symbolic power of anticommunism consolidates itself as a power of constitution, and functions so as to exclude alternative ways of remembering the past; a particular view on the past becomes universalized through its instantiation in an official narrative.

In order to support this claim in the chapter following the theoretical framing of the topic I describe and analyze the conditions of the formation of CPADCR and the conditions of production of the *Final Report*. These reveal and explain, I argue, the structural mentions and silences constituting the historical narrative as instrumental for circumscribing and excluding alternative memories and marginalizing competing discourses. However, the quintessential relational nature of anticommunism reproduces, through its very act of consolidation, a tension which simultaneously constitutes it and threatens it; as a dominant discourse that frames itself as oppositional, anticommunism can survive only through creating its own challenger. It is in the process of the contestation of the *Final Report* and its' usage within the political field that anticommunism and the corollary historical narrative are revealed as an orthodox discourse the substance of which implies the staging of its own competition for legitimacy. Following the analysis of the production and contestation of CPADCR and its work, I conclude by highlighting its position within a broader project of consolidating an official version of the past which aims to suppress competing memories of the communist period.

## **Chapter 1: The Case of CPADCR-between historical justice and historical knowledge**

In my treatment of CPADCR and the *Final Report* there are two main directions which I find mostly important. First of all the setting up of CPADCR represents a specific way of dealing with the communist past, and as such it represents a particular selection out of a broader range of arrangements designed to address matters of historical justice and reconciliation. Therefore any look at CPADCR must account for its particularities as a historical truth commission. Second of all, the main outcome of the work of CPADCR is a historical report that is generally accepted to be a scientific work tributary to the canons of academic historical writing. This brings in the necessity of looking at the *Final Report* while accounting for the specificities of the production of historical narratives.

This second aspect however brings up the necessity of broadening the lens through which the *Final Report* and its importance are assessed. While some works in historiography inform my analysis of the Report, I follow Trouillot (Trouillot 1995) in arguing that the production of history is multisited and that we must look at the production of history without falling into the positivist/constructivist dichotomy. This to say, following the same author, that while a naïve positivist epistemology conceals the power relations which condition the production of history, it is also at the same time that a degree of autonomy of the sociohistorical process must be acknowledged (Trouillot 1995:6). As such, there is a need to broaden the understanding of the field of historical production and account for the overlapping sites in which history is produced in order to reveal the conditions of production of a narrative (Trouillot 1995). However, while historical narratives must be understood as emerging within such a broadened context of production, the specificities of historical memory must also be taken into account. The relationship between memory and history and the place of history among different forms of remembering still constitute blossoming

academic interests while an entire body of literature has been probably marked by the inflation of terms such as “collective memory”, “commemoration”, “representation of the past” (Olick and Robbins 1998). My research is informed by the distinction between memory and history and as such I argue for the necessity to differentiate between different forms of remembering without judging them as epistemologically or ontologically distinct.

Looking at the production of a specific historical narrative must also provide an understanding of the forms in which historical narratives are part of broader legitimization struggles in relationship to specific conditions of knowledge production. I thus end my analysis of the work of CPADCR through suggesting that this can be understood as part of the intellectuals’ symbolic struggles over the power to impose dominant readings of the past. In this I rely on Pierre Bourdieu’s notions of symbolic capital and symbolic violence.

### **1.1 Truth Commissions. Selected forms of dealing with the past**

A limited number of academic works has dealt with the case of CPADCR and tried to understand its role among historical truth commissions (Ciobanu 2009; King 2007; Tanasoiu 2007; 2008). To the misfortune of the limited number what should be added is their very limited critical potential. While placing the case of Romania in the narrative of transitions to democracy, all the authors naturalize distinctions that should be themselves part of critical scrutiny, reproducing the orthodox discourse of the forces of democratization fighting the remnants of the former regime. The *Final Report* is depicted as the outcome of the struggle of anticommunist elites, with the potential successes or failures being judged according to the degree to which neo-communist agendas are resisted. Under the guise of scientific neutrality, these attempts reify the normative presuppositions behind the work of the Commission, while concealing the production of historical categories per se. Another problem concerns the schematic outline of the reception of the *Final Report*. Focusing almost exclusively on the

political reception of the *Final Report* and the issues surrounding the condemnation of the communist regime by president Traian Băsescu, these works both understate and overstate the nature of its reception. Whereas it is undeniably necessary to understand the immediate reactions in the political field, an exclusive focus on this conceals much of the instrumental function of the *Final Report* and its broader relevance within the cultural field. At best, these works fail to inquire into the conditions of production of the historical narrative and adopt the claim to universality of the particular standpoint from which truth is constructed. At worst, they reproduce the ideological mystifications of a discourse that has created the illusion of a dominant discourse functioning as oppositional.

Issues of postsocialist justice or more generally the condemnation of totalitarian or authoritarian regimes have been dealt with in detail by what is generally circumscribed as *transitional justice* literature (Elster 2004; Roht-Arriaza and Mariezcurrena 2006; Teitel 2000). Treating CPADCR within this framework is problematic though not only because this literature tends to focus on the legal arrangements following the demise of a regime in relationship to past legal arrangements, but also because it is permeated by normative assumptions which preclude a critical inquiry into the conditions of production and the process by which alternative ways of dealing with the past are selected. Differences in decommunization are to a great extent linked within this framework to the comeback of successor organizations and explanations rooted in the specificities of political culture, while it is often that the exceptionality of transitional periods is overstated through the lens of unsettlement with regard to the rule of law. The premise that at the heart of transition processes is the relationship between law and democratization is not only underpinned by an ideological idealization of the functioning of democratic systems, but it also empirically marginalizes alternative ways of dealing with the past. Nevertheless, the necessity to deal with the past through recourse to restorative and criminal justice is seen as a commonly shared

premise rather than an object of critical inquiry in itself. Out of the alternative ways of dealing with the past, historical truth commissions have however constituted themselves an object of inquiry.

While some of the analysis remains within the framework of transitional justice (Ensalaco 1994; Müller 2004), a more critical literature has emerged out of the analysis of what could be said to be the paradigmatic case of the field, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission -complemented though by works on antecedent cases in Latin America (Dyzenhaus 1998; Ensalaco 1994; Hayner 1994; Humphrey 2002; James and Van de Vijver 2001; Moon 2006; Natrass 1999; Wilson 2000; 2001). The approaches within this literature vary themselves to a great extent, ranging from legal anthropological analyses of human rights discourse, inquiring into the relationship between legal systems and their social basis (Wilson 2000; 2001) to narrative analyses that address the constitution of political subjects through discursive categories (Moon 2006). The editors of *After the TRC- Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa* (James and Van de Vijver 2001) bring together in the same volume a range of critiques that vary from the problematizations of the limitations of academic history through deconstructing the relationship between power, knowledge and memory to practical criticism of the workings of *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission* and its failure to actually provide a strong legal solution in the problem of retribution.

Before going further a clarification regarding the place of truth commissions among other arrangements designed to address matters of historical justice and reconciliation should be made. Truth commissions are only one particular form in which states have chosen to deal with the past and the legacies of previous regimes. Adam and Adam (2001) employ a classification which together with truth commissions includes five other state-sanctioned forms of grappling with the past: amnesia, trials and justice, lustration, negotiated restitution and compensation and political re-education. As the authors point out, usually these are not

carried out singularly, specific historical contexts influencing the mix of strategies that was taken up in different instances. Other cruder classifications distinguish between approaches to transitional justice that have been able to identify clearly perpetrators and victims and delayed replies where identifying victims and perpetrators was more difficult, notably in the case of post-Soviet regimes where solutions favored operating outside criminal law<sup>1</sup> (Ciobanu 2009). How is it that certain ways of dealing with the past are selected over others is a broad question in itself, and some of the answers authors analyzing the case of CPADCR have offered are particularly schematic. If we employ a more thorough classification such as the one used by Adam and Adam it becomes immediately obvious that choices in dealing with the past are to a great extent a result of interested selections made in the present, and that specific socio-political arrangements under the current regime play a major role in this process.

While it is clear that in many respects CPADCR and its final report are centered around the same problems of history and memory in relationship to notion of justice attention should be paid not to overestimate the similarities between the TRC or Latin American truth commissions and the Romanian Truth Commission simply by filing them under the category of historical truth commissions. At the most basic level it is obvious that there are major differences between CPADCR and the TRC in terms of origins, mandate and procedures. CPADCR was set up through presidential decree rather than by an act of parliament. The degree to which the constitution of CPADCR was brought to public attention is much lower than in the case of other of its counterparts. The selection of the members was attributed to the head of the Commission while the extent to which the Commission saw itself in the tradition of restorative justice is highly ambiguous. So is its mandate. Although presumably it was

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<sup>1</sup> Ciobanu (2009) argues that such differences between approaches seem to relate to the specific nature of repression in different regimes, thus completely relegating this selection to phenomena extrinsic to the process itself.

initially supposed to document comprehensively the history of the communist regime, by the publishing of its report it became obvious that it was mostly meant to document abuses under it. However, CPADCR had no legislative power and categories of international humanitarian law have shaped its work to a far less extent than in the case of the TRC. With regard to its sources and methodology, the choice of these was within the attributions of the head of the Commission; in its work CPADCR relied on archival sources, secondary sources (mostly previous scholarly work) and memoirs of individuals who were subjected to repression during communism. Unlike in the case of most other truth commissions the investigative role of the CPADCR did not include direct testimonies, it was not part of public scrutiny and all of its work, unlike the work of the TRC, was conducted in camera. CPADCR did not generate new archives and did not reach out to the public in its workings.

The nature of the reception of the Report also prevents an analysis that would assess its importance solely in terms of it establishing itself as a discursive technology and its capacity to reshape popular memory and create new subject identifications. Put very bluntly, this is mostly due to the rather narrow audience which has substantially debated the Report and is familiar with its contents; it is also attributable to its broadly symbolic function, rather than practical or legal. In addition to these it goes back to the procedures of CPADCR, which separated the entire process from broader audiences, unlike in the case of the TRC, where public hearings have been so central procedurally. The degree to which the narrative consolidated by the *Final Report* of CPADCR has actually entered the public arena should not be overstated (why and how this limited public debate might actually be central to projects of opposing forms of elite memory to popular memory will be later addressed). It is this basis that in part establishes one of the fundamental assumptions that will guide my research, namely that an analysis that overstates the independence of the Report as printed text fails to understand the contradictions which permeate the work of CPADCR.

## 1.2 History and memory as forms of remembering

The *Final Report* issued by CPADCR brings the analysis to the problem of the production of historical narratives and the specificities of historical writing as a form of remembering. While it is by now almost an axiom of the literature on historical production and memory that experiences of the present are conditioned by knowledge of the past and that historical narratives function as tools of legitimation for those in power (Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 1994; Connerton 1996; Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990; Gillis 1994; Trouillot 1995), how is it that images of the past are actually formed and what are the particularities of historical reconstruction under specific power arrangements is less clear. Much of the literature on collective memory draws on Halbwachs's seminal work, *On Collective Memory* ([1952] 1992), which opposes collective memory to history, with the latter seen as a scholarly endeavor which is to a great extent autonomous from the sociopolitical realm and lived experience. While Halbwachs's distinction has influenced much of the way in which collective memory is thought of, his view of history is now rather obsolete, with the constraints of historical knowledge and its interpretative limits having come under scholarly scrutiny (Zerubavel 1995). As Olick and Robbins (1998) point out the rediscovery of Halbwachs's work and the initial proliferation of works on memory can be traced back to multiculturalist theories which identify in the practices of historiography sources of domination, the postmodernist rethinking of linear visions of historicity and narrative constraints, as well as the work of hegemony theorists aiming to understand the instrumentalization of the past and the relationships that tie together history, memory and power.

The distinction between memory and history as epistemologically and ontologically distinct modes of knowledge has faded out, but the distinction itself has been maintained in an attempt to account for the plurality of forms relationships with the past take. In the analysis of

CPADCR I rely on a view which does not oppose memory and history as distinct forms of knowledge, but acknowledges that history, as a specific form of organizing the past, relies on representations of processes and that official history, as narrative, is grounded in “a claim to universal authority” which stands in opposition to the plural character of lived memory (Nora 1989). This dynamic of suppression not only of lived memories but also of alternative discourses or interpretations of the past is indeed central to the production of historical knowledge and narratives. As Gillis (1994) shows, memory work is embedded in class, gender and power relations that influence the outcome of what is remembered. Lowenthal’s observation (Lowenthal 1994) that what nations choose to forget is equally important to what is remembered brings to the foreground the problem of silencing. Trouillot develops this idea in a particularly insightful way, showing how inequalities in the historical process and those in the historical narrative are reproduced within any new accounts (Trouillot 1995). His stress on the multiple levels at which silences are produced overcomes the limitations of critical works in historiography that tend to privilege the discursive realm over the actual sociohistorical process in accounting for the divergence between the actual past and its historical representation (see Munslow 1997). In my analysis of CPADCR I therefore oppose views such as the one expressed by Connerton (1996), according to whom “Historical reconstruction is thus not dependent on social memory. Even when no statement about an event or custom has reached the historian by an unbroken tradition from eyewitnesses, it is still possible for the historian to rediscover what has been completely forgotten” (Connerton 1996:14). His overemphasis on the autonomy of the practicing historian (unless subjected to a repressive state apparatus) eludes precisely the multiple levels at which inequalities enter the historical narrative. Equally, his seemingly optimistic belief in the questioning of data and information by historians amounts to the obliteration of differences in the way facts

themselves are created, while postulating an undesirable dichotomous view of the relationship between memory and history.

### **1.3 History as an instrument of knowledge**

The literature on the relationship between memory and history can be placed within the broad problematic of knowledge production and in this sense I rely on the view that the production of knowledge is inherently political, or in Bourdieu's wording "the theory of knowledge is a dimension of political theory because the specifically symbolic power to impose the principles of the construction of reality-in particular, social reality-is a major dimension of political power" (Bourdieu 1993:165). Trouillot's understanding of a broadened field of historical production, while it is insightful in terms of understanding how is it that historical narratives themselves are articulated, it remains less useful in understanding how is it that narratives are instrumentalized. To this extent Trouillot's conceptual framework is less insightful in understanding the broader structures within which historical representation is tied to particular forms of legitimation and domination. For understanding the stakes implied in the historical narrative put forward by CPADCR I complement my analysis with Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of symbolic capital and symbolic violence. Seeing the production of historical narratives as a cultural practice and relying on Bourdieu's understanding of intellectual practices as interested pursuits is the basis on which I try to understand how is it that the constitution and work of CPADCR function as instruments of domination. History and historical narratives constitute an instrument of knowledge, and as such they also function to impose and reproduce principles of the construction of reality. The *Final Report* can in this sense illuminate how is it that history contributes to the reproduction of the dominant order, how is it that the orthodoxy of the cultural field is challenged and how modes of legitimation get transmitted.

Central for understanding Bourdieu's notion of symbolic power are the notions of symbolic capital, violence and struggles. Symbolic capital, "a form assumed by different kinds of capital when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu 1990:129) is key in determining the "objective classifications and the hierarchy of values granted to individuals and groups" (Bourdieu 1990:135) and as such possessors of a large symbolic capital "are in a position to impose the scale of values most favorable to their products" (Bourdieu 1990:135). Moreover, under the effect of official nomination or legalization of symbolic capital relative perspectives can gain the appearance of universal values (Bourdieu 1990). Any society though is marked by the conflicts between different symbolic powers, so a central question is "on what conditions a symbolic power can become a power of constitution?" (Bourdieu 1990:138). Symbolic struggles can take the form of acts of representation, on the objective level, while on the subjective level these take the form of attempts at challenging the categories of perception of the world and imposing a new construction (Bourdieu 1990). Bourdieu's observation that "the most typical of these strategies of construction are those which aim at reconstructing retrospectively a past adjusted to the needs of the present" (1990: 135) speaks to the possible salient role of historical narratives as offering grounds for legitimation.

Treating the production of history as a system of symbolic goods production means that the ideological function it fulfills as such must be recognized (Bourdieu 1993:188). Accepting that the accumulation of symbolic capital is a valuable form of accumulation, we arrive at asking how is it that competition over the maximization of symbolic profit is actually carried out. In order to understand how the securing of symbolic power functions, the instruments through which symbolic struggles are carried out must be identified. Relying on the claim that "on the collective and more properly political level they, i.e. symbolic struggles, include all strategies which aim at imposing a new construction of social reality by

rejecting the old political lexicon or maintaining the orthodox view” (Bourdieu 1991:134), it follows that the *Final Report* and the act of condemnation of the communist regime constitute the juncture at which history, as an instrument of knowledge itself, meets an act of official nomination. In this relation the historical narrative can “impose itself with the authority and necessity of a collective position”, while the act of official nomination loses its character as a political, therefore contestable act, while borrowing the legitimacy of an act that bases itself in the apparently neutral scientific truth.

Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic violence has been challenged as remaining on the level of a “merely rhetorical usage”, “a way of dramatizing” the argument of the reproduction of social stratification while joining it with a moral judgment passed on the act of the reproduction itself (Collins 2008:24). This however is based in a reading of the notion of symbolic violence which sees it as “smooth, tension free, non-confrontational, highly repetitive, and without situational contingencies”. Such a reading though reifies the processual character of symbolic violence while identifying the process with the act of the reproduction of domination itself. In this the argument that the instruments for imposing the legitimate divisions of the world are themselves fought over is lost and the capacity of a dominant order to reproduce itself is overstated. Of the contrary, Bourdieu himself asserts that the reproduction and transmission of cultural resources or symbolic capital rely on a process of systematic inculcation (Bourdieu 1993:187) and that when social relations do not contain within themselves the principle of their own reproduction they must be continuously created (p.187). Symbolic power, “capable of producing real effects without any apparent expenditure of energy”, functions precisely so as to secure the objective violence contained within relations of power (p.170); the violence inherent in the reproduced divisions is thus maintained but misrecognized. The use of the concept of symbolic violence is far from trivial if in its employment the initial act of violence or the effect of securing the dispossession of

certain groups from the means to impose their own vision of the social world is identified. Reformulating this in terms of the empirical case analyzed, if in the act of speaking the truth about the past through recourse to historical production the marginalization of alternative views about the past takes place and the experience of certain groups is silenced it is adequate to understand it as a form of symbolic violence.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

Treating CPADCR as a descriptive case study I relied on methodological triangulation. Understanding the formation and the work of CPADCR through relying on a broadened understanding of the field of historical production required drawing on several forms of data collection. Interviews with members of CPADCR as well as with several of the authors grouped around the only critical volume addressing the *Final Report* proved to be a critical source for understanding the internal dynamics of the Commission as well as the dynamics of the contestation of the work of CPADCR. The discourses surrounding the constitution and the work of the Commission have been reconstructed primarily through secondary sources, most notably press articles. The discursive analysis of the coverage of the topic by four publications during the period 2005-2010, namely “22”, “Dilema Veche”, “Observator Cultural” and “Idei în Dialog” has been essential to understanding the reception of the *Final Report* in the cultural field. In addition to this I tried to carry out a comprehensive reconstitution of the position takings of the individual members of CPADCR in the printed press. What was proven significantly challenging in the research process was contacting the members of CPADCR and establishing interviews with them. While a number of them outspokenly refused the invitation for an interview, contacting others proved to be difficult with most of them being public persons and with some of the developments surrounding the case of IICCR already bringing them into the attention of the media. The availability and willingness of some of the interviewees to describe in detail the course of their research as

well as the history of their cooptation into the Commission was central for reconstituting the internal dynamics of the Commission and resisting the widespread depictions of it as a unitary body. Interviews with the editors of the volume *The Illusion of Anticommunism* have helped me reconstitute the depiction of the cultural left within dominant discourses and to understand the dynamics of contestation of the *Final Report* as part of the broader struggles for legitimacy within the cultural field.

A central observation regards the way in which I employ the selected theoretical framework in relation to the methodology. While I employ Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence in order to understand how is it that a historical narrative comes to serve the reproduction of classificatory schemes, I methodologically depart from the research course his theory is built on. However, in congruence with the author's own designation of the use of theory in relation to the research object , I make use of it as a "thinking tool" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) meant to understand an object of inquiry constructed through ethnographic data (in the form of interview material) and analysis of secondary sources embodied in multiple forms of texts.

## Chapter 2: Situating the interest in the recent past

### 2.1 The “trial of communism” and the formation of CPADCR

The setting up of CPADCR goes back to April 2006, when after a series of calls demanding the condemnation of the communist regime president Traian Băsescu set up a commission that would provide him with the evidence on the basis of which he could pursue such an action. From the very beginning the Commission bore the touch of its political nurturing, as it was formed at a time when the Institute for the Investigation of the Crimes of Communism (IICCR) had already been set up as a governmental institute under the aegis of the Liberal Party (PNL) and prime minister Călin Popescu Tăriceanu. In the context of the growing divide between the government and the president and the sharpened struggle between PD and PNL over representing the right<sup>2</sup>, the setting up of CPADCR was later interpreted as an attempt at shaking the perceived liberal monopoly over the institutional setting of anticommunism, with IICCR being a permanent structure and at the same time PNL having pursued steps in the direction of some other forms of dealing with the communist past, most notably supporting the possible passing of a lustration law. However, it must be noted that the formation of CPADCR was also indeed linked to the pressure coming from public intellectuals that asked, in the form of open letters, for the official condemnation of the communist regime.<sup>3</sup> Several such initiatives are linked to the discussions surrounding the

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<sup>2</sup> This was also the period during which PD redefined itself as a right wing party, breaking with its social-democrat orientation (that goes back to the early 90s and links PD with FSN, the coalition that governed Romania immediately after the collapse of communism).

<sup>3</sup> The call that immediately precedes the setting up of CPADCR, initiated by Sorin Ilieșiu, was presented to the presidency in March 2006. Under the title of „Call for the President of Romania, Traian Băsescu”, several dozen non governmental organizations and several hundred intellectuals signed the petition concluding that „through the condemnation of the criminality of the communist regime you will prove (i.e. the president) that you have the political will to carry forth an act of historical justice, premise of national reconciliation, as has been requested by the civil society ever since 1990”. Among the individual signatories of the call were a significant number of the future members of CPADCR (among them Sorin Antohi, Ioana Boca, Ruxandra Cesereanu, Dorin Dobrințu, Radu Filipescu, Armand Goșu, Virgil Ierunca, Monica Lovinescu, Marius Oprea, Alexandru Zub) but also some of the *Final Report*'s critics, such as Florin Abraham and Ovidiu Șimonca. Notable about the text of the call is its acknowledgment of the already existing wide body of scholarly work that speaks to the history of the communist regime and abuses under it. For the official text of the call as well as for the list of signatories see <http://www.gds.ong.ro/apel.htm>. Another call, from April 2005, “Proclamation for Romania”, also initiated by

setting up of CPADCR, all of them initiated by Sorin Ilieșiu, vicepresident of AC and future member of CPADCR.

From the very outset the call for the official condemnation of the communist past was marked by the tension between those who endorsed the necessity of scientific proof documenting the criminality of the regime and supporters of the view that such proof was superfluous and therefore the formation of a commission was unnecessary. The idea of a commission for investigating the past was already brought up by the president in 2005, when during an interview he declared that “unless there is an academic position, a position of some people who gather in a commission, they document themselves and come and say << Mr. President, this is our conclusion, this is what happened, you have all the right to condemn 45 years from the existence of Romanians>>...” (Băsescu 2005) he would not give course to the call for condemnation. The idea of establishing a commission was met with suspicion, including by the future head of CPADCR, Vladimir Tismăneanu. In October 2005, Vladimir Tismăneanu was saying: “you, Mr. Goșu (i.e. the interviewer and future member of CPADCR) know just as well as I do that the literature regarding the problem is by now overwhelming and that the stake is before anything else one that pertains to political will” (Tismăneanu 2005). Discussing the possible adoption of the model of the commission for the investigation of the Romanian Holocaust, Tismăneanu was saying that a “Commission similar to the Wiesel Commission would need a person with the moral authority of Elie Wiesel as its president” and that he “doesn’t feel that the former dissidents and those of us who wrote in the publications of the Romanian anticommunist exile feel the need for the confirmation of such blatant truths” (Tismăneanu 2005).

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Sorin Ilieșiu did not elicit an official answer from the president. The calls for decommunization on behalf of public intellectuals did not end with the official condemnation of the regime, but have been followed by calls requesting the following of the recommendations of the *Final Report*. Most notably, the August 2008 “Pact for the decommunization of Romania”, initiated by the same Sorin Ilieșiu, also invokes the “Prague declaration” and calls for solidarity between the civil society, political parties and the president in order to carry out the “moral reform of Romania” (“Pactul Pentru Decomunizarea României”).

What seemed to be at the time of the setting up of CPADCR a general consensus over the criminal nature of the communist past and the abundance of scientific work documenting it is indeed supported by the flourishing of both strictly scholarly work as well the extended publishing of memorial literature in postsocialist Romania. But more importantly these cannot be regarded as individual or isolated attempts at grappling with the past. The study of Romanian communism benefits from a rather broad institutional infrastructure, both state and privately funded. Before turning to the details of the setting up of CPADCR a couple of remarks regarding the interest in the study of the recent past in Romanian context are necessary.

## **2.2 Reclaiming the recent past: the pursuit of truth in context**

The interest in the recent past is not confined to the academic environments and historical narratives are produced at the intersection of several fields, this being eloquently exemplified by the production of the *Final Report*. The necessity of studying as well as coming to terms with Romania's communist past has been argued and disputed for by scholars, representatives of the civil society and political actors, and the relationship in which these actors stand to each other has significantly influenced the types of historical narratives advanced. However, it is also undeniable that historians themselves have had a privileged voice in setting up the narrative of the *Final Report* and as such at least a schematic placing of its production within the field of historiography is required.

Probably the most notable tension that has marked the writing of history in postsocialist Romania is that between the representatives of a nationalist discourse that is traced back to the canons of history writing during socialism and a so-called "reformist camp" –with the latter comprised of mostly younger historians and/or historians with strong institutional connections with foreign academic research institutions and universities (see Culic 2005). However, the nationalist strands of historiography have actually a dual heritage,

as they inherit and recuperate both communist and pre-communist historiographic traditions, sometimes forged in the same narrative (Livezeanu 2003). The institutional setting surrounding historical production has been seen as reflecting these distinctions. The history section of the Romanian Academy and the historians associated with it are often seen as shaping the agenda of historical production in undesirable ways by the younger researchers (Culic 2005). Many of the works produced here, including the major work *The History of Romanians* (Berindei and Căndea 2001) have been severely criticized for reproducing nationalist myths. Much of this opposition comes indeed from researchers enjoying greater freedom in the more autonomous university departments, however, these historians themselves are part of what is actually a much broader apparatus of production of Romania's recent history. Opposing the nationalist historians to the reformist group, while it does capture a major tension within the field of historical production is misleading because not only does it depict the "reformist" group as monolithic, it also suggests that historians belonging to the reformist group are much more peripheral than they actually are.<sup>4</sup>

The institutionalized study of Romania's recent past is embodied in a number of research centers, among these the most important being the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile, the International Center for Studies on Communism (affiliated to the Civic Academy), The National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism (affiliated to the Romanian Academy), the Center for Studies on Communism and Postcommunism (further referred to as CSCP-set up through the collaboration of the former IICCR and the history department of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" university), The Romanian Institute for Recent History (IRIR-private organization, set-up at the initiative of the former ambassador of the Netherlands to Romania). Much of the work in

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<sup>4</sup> This depiction is of course due partly to the time at which the quoted authors have conducted their research. Recent struggles in the institutional field of the research of the communist past has however brought to the fore conflicts which undermine the possibility of thinking about a rather unitary "reformist" camp.

these research centers has been disseminated either through the publications of the research centers themselves, or through works published with the collaboration of Romanian publishing houses, most notably Polirom (for example the IICCR annual is published by Polirom). Three of these centers have been set up after the year 2000 (IRIR in 2000, IICCR in 2005, CSCP in 2007), confirming that contrary to some grim predictions the interest and research opportunities related to Romania's recent past have diversified.

The interest in Romania's recent past has also been on the agenda of other organizations. Among these, the Association for the Former Political Detainees from Romania (AFDPR-Asociația Foștilor Deținuți Politici din România) and The National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS) have both had a considerable role in shaping specific ways of dealing with the communist past, most notably in and through the opening up of the regime's archives. Significant pressure in turning towards the study of the communist past has also originated, especially in the first decade after the fall of the communist regime, from the so-called historical parties, most notably the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the National Peasant Party (PNȚ). The political trajectories of these parties and their role in the Romanian Democratic Convention (the broad alliance that won the 1996 elections) has been linked to their strong anticommunist agendas, instantiated not only in a radical anticommunist discourse but also in the specific measures they supported, most notably a lustration law.

A special position in advancing the interest in Romania's recent past has been occupied by two non-governmental associations, the Group for Social Dialogue, respectively the Civic Alliance. Seen as composed mostly of liberal intellectuals, with a majority of them having a claim to a dissident past, these two associations have had a major role in shaping the Romanian anticommunist discourse. Founded in 1990, GDS has never been directly involved politically (although members of GDS have held political office); its weekly publication, 22,

has constituted its main platform, and enjoyed significant popularity in the early 1990s when its weekly circulation was around 150.000 copies (Pavel and Huiu 2003). The Civic Alliance (AC), similarly self-described as a “representative organism of the Romanian civil society” and as a “concentration of active and responsible extraparlimentary forces”<sup>5</sup>, has been defined from the very beginning along the lines of an anticommunist discourse. As opposed to GDS, AC has had a more direct involvement in the political realm, through the constitution of the Party of the Civic Alliance<sup>6</sup> (Partidul Alianța Civică- PAC, in 1991). As will be discussed in the following section, quite a number of the members of CPADCR have also been active members in these two organizations that have shaped early anticommunist discourse and have contributed to the formation of a specific imaginary of communism among Romanian intellectuals.

To this national institutional structure within which the history and memory of anticommunism is constructed the supranational structures should be added. Romanian efforts to institutionalize the history of anticommunism have been officially linked to EU accession (the need for a symbolic rupture with the communist past has been advocated by Traian Băsescu in the context of Romania joining the EU, and his official declaration was issued less than a month before the official accession date). International calls for repudiating communism both in its historical embodiment as well as on an ideological level have also received wide support among Romanian intellectuals; this is the case of the 2008 “Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism”.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> see “Carta Alianței Civice”, the founding document of AC (Pavel and Huiu 2003:523-526)

<sup>6</sup> The two organizations cannot be seen as overlapping, the existence of PAC being marked by a tensed relationship with AC. Undoubtedly though, PAC has benefited from the early popularity of AC and has drafted its agenda along the lines of the discourse drafted within AC. The calls for redressing the “moral and spiritual crisis” in which Romania finds itself, along the lines of “faith, humanism and democracy”, as well as the constant calls for the truth about the communist regime and the 1989 Revolution are a shared legacy of the two organizations.

<sup>7</sup> For the text of the declaration see <http://praguedeclaration.org/>

While it is this institutional structure to which the systematic interest in Romania's recent past must be connected, it must be noted that the dominant discourse in the Romanian cultural field starting from the early 1990s has been a pervasively anticommunist one. The intellectuals grouped around these institutions have struggled for the recognition of the legitimacy of their opposition as well as for defining their position as oppositional against the former regime and what has been constructed as its successor, both within the political and cultural field. As Gheorghiu (Gheorghiu 2007:349) observes, "the distance from the old institutions, the repudiation of the communist model and the "communist" intellectual have become the measure of the adherence to the new moral and political order". Postsocialist Romania has been marked by the repeated calls of public intellectuals for a "trial of communism" and self-declared, right wing liberal intellectuals have traditionally endorsed and supported the platforms of right wing political parties<sup>8</sup>. In the cultural field, the categories of right wing liberalism have been naturalized so as to constitute the legitimate categories through which to discuss the socio-political order and consecration within the cultural field is reliant on adherence to the ideological coordinates summed under the slogan of anticommunism (Gheorghiu 2007). While at this point this contention might be open to criticism, the existence of such a dominant, orthodox discourse is confirmed by the closer analysis of the work of CPADCR and its reception.

### **2.3 The selection of producers**

As it is obvious by now the formation of CPADCR more than 16 years after the fall of the communist regime meant that the Commission would necessarily function within a context in which the studying of the recent past and the very interest in it would have a critical history of inquiry to which any such major project as the one of CPADCR would be indebted.

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed description of the participation of intellectuals in the political field and their role in forging CDR (Convenția Democrată Română, The Romanian Democratic Convention), the broad right wing coalition that won the 1996 elections, see Pavel and Huiu (2003).

Indeed, the details of the setting up of CPADCR confirm this. As head of CPADCR, Vladimir Tismăneanu had the complete freedom to select the members. The final composition of CPADCR included 18 members, 20 experts and Vladimir Tismăneanu as head of the commission<sup>9</sup>. In addition to this 12 other people are credited as collaborators in the writing of the *Final Report*. Notable is the case of three members that have resigned or were dismissed. This is the case of metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu and Sorin Antohi (who both resigned from CPADCR in September, respectively December 2006) over allegations of having collaborated with the *Securitate*. The case of former dissident, Paul Goma, who was dismissed following a personal conflict between him and Vladimir Tismăneanu, speaks to the internal dynamics of CPADCR. Discussing his conflict with Paul Goma, the head of CPADCR was declaring in 2006: “you cannot be part of a commission when you contest the moral and scientific credibility of the president of the commission, the man who invites you” (Tismăneanu 2006b). As for the basis for extending his invitations, Vladimir Tismăneanu has repeatedly justified his choices in terms of inviting outstanding voices of the civil society, prominent scientific, intellectual and political figures (see for example Tismăneanu 2006a; 2006b).

Namely, two forms of legitimation were at work in the selection of the members and experts: symbolic capital in the form of recognized anticommunist dissidence and expert knowledge. The two different groups that comprise the individuals working for CPADCR, members and experts, are to a large degree separated precisely by the two forms of symbolic capital the recognition of which led to their naming. On the one hand, members were almost all public intellectuals self-defined as liberal intellectuals, who have been active promoters of the anticommunist discourse and had close ties with some of the most prominent institutions

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<sup>9</sup> The final structure of CPADCR consists of president Vladimir Tismăneanu, members Sorin Alexandrescu, Mihnea Berindei, Constantin Ticu Dumitrescu, Radu Filipescu, Virgil Ierunca, Sorin Ilieșiu, Gail Klugman, Monica Lovinescu, Nicolae Manolescu, Marius Oprea, H.-R. Patapievi, Dragoș Petrescu, Andrei Pippidi, Romulus Rusan, Levente Salat, Stelian Tănase, Cristian Vasile, Alexandru Zub; experts Hannelore Baier, Ioana Boca, Stefano Bottoni, Ruxandra Cesereanu, Radu Chiriță, Adrian Cioflâncă, Dorin Dobrințu, Robert Fürtos, Armand Goșu, Constantin Iordachi, Maria Mureșan, Germina Nagăț, Eugen Negrici, Novák Csaba Zoltán, Olti Agoston, Cristina Petrescu, Anca Șincan, Virgiliu Țârău, Cristian Vasile, Smaranda Vultur.

that have been shaping the discourse about Romania's recent past, namely GDS, The Civic Alliance and AFDPR. The notable exception is that of the few researchers who were seen as possessors of the largest share of institutionalized cultural capital within the national field of historiography or the study of Romania's communist past. The paramount example is the case of Gail Kligman, whose recognition as international scholar was repeatedly invoked by the head of CPADCR in defense of the *Final Report*. Similarly, the names of Romanian exiles Virgil Ierunca and Monica Lovinescu have been used insistently as a source of symbolic legitimation by Vladimir Tismăneanu, although it is likely that none of them have contributed substantially to the *Final Report*, with the former having passed away before its completion and with suggestions of Monica Lovinescu having accepted to be a member of the CPADCR only as a form of declaring her support towards its delegation and mission.

As far as the selection of the experts is concerned, these were judged to be leading scholars in the analysis of the Romanian communist regime or on closely related topics. The previous connections between the selected experts are confirmed by a simple look at their previous or current institutional affiliations and publications, as well as by some of the interviewed experts. Where the institutional connections or the visibility of a researcher and the corollary research area within the field of communism studies would not point towards a clear delegation, personal networks and the subsequent delegation of the investiture were at work. The relevance of the previous connections of the expert members is not to be judged, as some critics of CPADCR have, in terms of the superficial denunciation of an academic "coterie". However, as seen in the *Final Report* the particular conditions of the cooptation of the experts have led to the reproduction of the recurrent subjects of the field. Their reproduction within an officially sanctioned narrative assists the reification of a hierarchy of problematics which is itself grounded in contingent inclusions and exclusions.

The leap from generalized suspicion or opposition among intellectuals to the cooptation of one of the intellectuals distrustful of the project as head of CPADCR has not occurred, as some of the more violent attacks in the media have suggested through an act of dissimulation. Rather, the initial suspicion was integrated by Vladimir Tismăneanu in a broader discourse that centered around acknowledging from the very outset the future “verdict” of CPADCR.<sup>10</sup> To this the idea of the pedagogic function of the work of CPADCR<sup>11</sup> was added, as well as the strong emphasis on the necessity to condemn not just the communist past per se but the ideology of communism, found to stand in a causal relationship with the abuses of the regime,<sup>12</sup> together with the reinforcement of the idea of the act itself being a response to the expectations and demands of civil society and public intellectuals for incontestably condemning the communist regime.

It therefore becomes obvious that from the very beginning the founding of CPADCR was grounded in a set of multiple recognitions and exclusions. Traian Băsescu’s very delegation of the act of speaking the truth about the past reinforced two primary claims: on the one hand personal memory could not act as the basis for speaking the truth about the past;<sup>13</sup> on the other, the possibility to formulate a singular truth about the past belongs to the realm of professional expertise and can be achieved through scientific investigation. A political act was thus displaced from the arena of the field of opinion and planned so as to be grounded in a verdict that had the possibility of being formulated as an impartial truth through the mediation of science. However, this dynamic was complemented by the fact that in the act

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<sup>10</sup> See for example Vladimir Tismăneanu’s declaration while interviewed by another member of CPADCR, Armand Goșu: “I believe that when the president invited me to become the coordinator of this Commission, Mr. Băsescu admitted that we are actually on the road towards condemning communism, that we know what the result will be” (Tismăneanu 2006a)

<sup>11</sup> “what Mr. Băsescu wants is that text, written not only for today’s generation, but also for the future ones, that clearly states how this experiment was possible, who were his human carriers, who were its victims, who were the executioners” (Tismăneanu 2006a)

<sup>12</sup> “Our report will illuminate precisely the causal relationship between the communist ideology, with its utopian precepts, and the terrorist-concentration system” (Tismăneanu 2006a)

<sup>13</sup> “[...] starting from what I feel as a citizen of Romania and what I felt until 1989, I as president cannot go to condemn communism. I think we must have the elegance to design a scientific work” (Băsescu 2005)

of the delegation its initial justification was reproduced. In the confrontation with the past, the liberal intellectuals who had forged their reputation as anticommunists and who felt that “there is no need for the investigation of such blatant truths” secured the right to speak the truth about the past. Having the power “to speak in the name of non-professionals” (Bourdieu 1991:190) and therefore to impose a singular reading of the past as a collective position, the president transferred this authority to what was recognized as the authority of a body of experts who would be able to formulate an apparently neutral truth.

Yet, the selection of the members of CPADCR lead to the constitution of a commission the very coming into being of which confirmed that the representations of those who were to present the history of the communist regime as opponents and victims of it were the only legitimate ones. The subjective experience of communism, or better said, anticommunism in its contingent form, as the product of a relationship between intellectuals and a political regime, became the basis for forging a verdict that could impose itself as a collective representation. The verdict upon the past was to be mediated through two forms of selection. On the one hand the recourse to scientific expertise as neutral, on the other the recognition within the cultural field of anticommunism as a form of symbolic capital. Forged within the act of official nomination, these two levels of exclusion constituted the premise for a particular vision upon the past to impose itself as universal. The past and its remembering could now take the form of a narrative to which a truth value could be assigned, although in the act of delegating the capacity to judge the past a hierarchy of legitimate forms of remembering was already at work.

## Chapter 3: The Final Report

### 3.1 The Narrative

The major outcome of the work of CPADCR was the *Final Report* it issued. The Report was first available on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2006 on the website of the presidency, and at least two different versions were circulated, a new one replacing the former in January<sup>14</sup>. A final, revised printed version<sup>15</sup> was published in 2007 by Humanitas, one of the most prominent Romanian publishing houses<sup>16</sup>. An unsigned editorial note to the volume informs the reader that its publishing in 1500 copies is done exclusively on the money of the publishing house and that the publishing of the *Final Report* is one of its most important editorial acts, a natural continuation of “all the books and documents published during 17 years about those <<obsessing decades>> that have disfigured Romania and the incalculable consequences of which continue to burden our history and shape our destinies” (Tismăneanu et al. 2007). The printed edition also includes the message delivered by the president in front of the Parliament on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, the discourse in which he presented the *Final Report*, embraced some of its recommendations and officially condemned communism as an “illegitimate and criminal regime”; the same editorial note informs us that this message constitutes an official act of the Romanian state.

The two events, the presentation of the Report and Băseșcu’s statement were very much judged together in the initial reactions. Many of the early attacks came from the extreme right party PRM, with its leader being among those whose collaboration with the

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<sup>14</sup> The differences between the two versions are minor, but the latter does introduce minor editing corrections while also redressing factual inaccuracies.

<sup>15</sup> All of the following references refer to the print edition (Tismăneanu, Dobrințu, and Vasile 2007)

<sup>16</sup> Humanitas, early inheritor of the infrastructure of the publishing house of PCR, has been one of the key institutions in the advancement of the intellectual agenda of the anticommunist public intellectuals ever since 1990. It has also had a strong role in the rehabilitation of the myth of prosperous interwar Romania and interwar intellectuals of extreme right political orientation, such as Nae Ionescu. For an insightful synthesis on the early 1990s accumulation of symbolic capital of the anticommunist liberal elites and their institutional connections, see Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, *Intelectualii în câmpul puterii* (2007).

former regime is denounced. Similarly, former president Ion Iliescu, presented as an important figure of the communist regime and the most important representative of a neocommunist government, has attacked the Report as being a “manipulative” one and lacking “intellectual honesty”, while also later denouncing the chronology it aims to impose and the lack of recognition of the revolutionary character of some of the actions of FSN ("Iliescu, Foc Și Pară Din Cauza Comisiei Tismăneanu" 2006; Mediafax 2009). Two Romanian dailies published several articles systematically incriminating both the *Final Report* and the members of CPADCR, these being *Jurnalul Național* and *Ziua* (the latter associated with Victor Roncea, journalist and member of Civic Media Association). While the attacks coming from the first were perhaps relatively more moderate, they still aimed at discrediting individual members of CPADCR, contesting their credibility through biographical details. The attacks were also connected with attacks against president Băsescu and accusations of him trying to hide his communist past. The attacks coming from *Ziua* and moreover the attacks coming from Victor Roncea and other members of Civic Media Association had a notoriously orthodoxist and nationalist character and were of a violence that had already relegated them from the very beginning to a discreted niche. This in itself would have recommended their originators as unlikely partners for dialogue for the group of public intellectuals defending the Report, as the acceptable limits of an imagined community of dialogue, as Vladimir Tismăneanu has repeatedly declared, are those of a liberal democracy. This predicament however was not supported by the actual course which debates surrounding the *Final Report* took, as critiques originating from the extreme right have been constantly addressed while more thorough position takings within the cultural press have been constantly ignored. Before looking in depth at the dynamics of the contestation of the Report a synthetic picture of the Report itself is required.

The *Final Report* (Tismăneanu et al. 2007) consists of three major parts: The Romanian Communist Party; Society, Economy and Culture; and The Repression. While the document was initially supposed to be a document of about 100 pages, widely accessible to the public, the *Final Report* has obviously deviated from this initial image, in its over 800 page formula that has been claimed as the most comprehensive history of Romanian communism. From the very outset the idea that the document itself would be unitary is misleading. The differences between different sections are considerable. These range from thoroughly documented sections, conforming to the canons of rigorous academic writing (see for example the sections on the situation of the Hungarian national minority, the demographic politics of the Ceaușescu regime, students' protests in 1956 or the section on the situation of neoprottestant denominations) to highly emotional depictions of the persecutions suffered by political prisoners.<sup>17</sup> This fragmented nature of the Report was already expected as the work was carried out by researchers individually or within smaller research groups, and the final form of the Report was not under the supervision of all the members. As interviews with members of CPADCR confirm, the members met only a couple of times and none of the meetings was attended by all the members.<sup>18</sup> With regard to the shortcomings of the Report, interviewed members attribute them mostly to the limited work time they had (the mandate of CPADCR ran from April to December, but some researchers were co-opted as late as July) as well as to practical constraints following problems in accessing the archives. What is notable though is that although the researchers were supposedly granted a wider access to archives

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<sup>17</sup> This observation can be hardly said to pertain to a matter of stylistic preference. That the style and type of argumentation often departs from the canons and standards of academic writing is illustrated over and over again. See for example pp.542-543. In a section already entitled sentimental epilogue the nation and religion are simultaneously conjured in the act of remembering: "In every atom of this universe of suffering (i.e. the concentration universe) hides a man, a biography that passes through the circles of hell, but keeps its own thoughts, feelings and memory"; "...Not all victims have been martyrs, but they are all beginning us, from their heaven, not to forget them" (p.543). The abundance of individual portraits and characterizations is also overwhelming. On page 65 we learn that Gheorghiu Dej, "despite his appearance as a modest, trustworthy man, was a perfect plotter, shrewd and decided, as well as a sophisticated negotiator". These are isolated examples of a descriptive pattern that traverses the entire Report.

<sup>18</sup> That the work of CPADCR was already being carried out under the ideological tutelage of GDS is perhaps best captured symbolically by the fact that the Bucharest meetings took place at the GDS headquarters.

than ever before, and while new archival material is indeed brought to light, there is little in the substantive content of the Report that is new. This draws heavily on previously published material (much of the analysis about PCR borrows extensively from Vladimir Tismăneanu's previous work, for example) or stays within the focus of topics that were already accessible to the public through related research (such is the case of Gail Kligman's work, for example). The situation of the sections devoted to the analysis of the process of collectivization speaks eloquently about the synthetic rather than genuinely research oriented nature of the Report. Indeed, although they insist that there are some entirely newly written sections (!) the interviewed members themselves do acknowledge that the Report itself should be regarded rather as a synthesis. The Report, rather than advancing the state of the historiography of the Romanian communist regime, reflects it precisely, even according to the radiography that precedes the Report itself (pp.36-46).

Framing the Report as a unitary work is mostly achieved through the way it is situated by the introduction and the conclusion. It is here that the triple function of the official discourse comes to fore: the Report performs a diagnostic, it functions as an administrative discourse and presents the facts, or "says what people really have done" (Bourdieu 1990). In terms of the diagnostic, the overarching statement is that of the undisputable illegitimate and criminal nature of the communist regime.<sup>19</sup> This itself is supported by the intermediary conclusions of the Report: abuses under the communist regime stand in a causal relationship to its ideology;<sup>20</sup> the communist regime had an antinational character and it was a regime alien to the values of the Romanian nation;<sup>21</sup> communist structures, methods and mentalities

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<sup>19</sup> "On the basis of examining thousands and thousands of documents, taking into account the existence of an immense analytical literature and memoirs that prove the antipatriotic nature of the communist dictatorship, we can state that the communist regime in Romania (1945-1989) was illegitimate and criminal" (Tismăneanu et al. 2007:765)

<sup>20</sup> "the supremacy of ideology is the key to understanding this system" (Tismăneanu et al. 2007:31)

<sup>21</sup> "Simply put, for four and a half decades, the Romanian state was confiscated by a political group alien to the interests and aspirations of the Romanian nation" (Tismăneanu et al. 2007:33); "the Romanian communist

have survived the official collapse of the communist regime and have hindered the democratic development of society;<sup>22</sup> the possibility of collective guilt or incrimination is excluded, immediately responsible for abuses under the regime are the party apparatus and the institutions of the communist state, as well as individual members of the political organizations and corollary organizations of control and repression. These intermediary diagnostics are themselves complemented by a detailed list of crimes that can be attributed to the communist regime.<sup>23</sup>

The administrative dimension is captured in the recommendations of the Commission that constitute the last part of the conclusion. These are divided into five different categories. The first necessary measure that is imposed by the performed diagnostic is that of officially condemning the communist regime. This includes condemning both the instruments of the regime (ideology and state apparatus), as well as the responsible persons. Under the heading of memorialization, CPADCR recommends consolidating the infrastructure of memory, through a national commemorative day for the victims of communism, erecting commemorative monuments, organizing conferences, the setting up a museum of communism, adapting the results of the Report for didactic use (namely elaborating a manual for the study of communism in high schools), setting up a research group in order to elaborate an encyclopedia of Romanian communism etc. The recommendations pertaining to legislation and juridical aspects include the urgent adoption of a lustration law, but also the incrimination of apologies of the communist regime or its leaders; the banning of the public displays of

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regime was hostile to veritable spiritual values, which it attacked and aimed to destroy”(Tismăneanu et al. 2007:27)

<sup>22</sup> “Communism collapsed only officially on December 22, 1989. Unofficially, structures, and especially communist methods and mentalities have continued to exist under various forms, some of them extremely serious, which we have the duty to present precisely because they represent forms of manifestation of the old regime, transfigured, but not fundamentally transformed” (Tismăneanu et al. 2007:776); “The years that followed after 1989 have signified a continuous struggle between the forces of the old regime, irrespective of the masks they wore and continue to wear, and that part of Romania that desired and desires an open society” (Tismăneanu et al. 2007:23)

<sup>23</sup> These range from “abandoning the national interest” to the destruction of political parties and the repressing of opposition movements. For the complete list see pp. 774-776 (Tismăneanu et al. 2007).

communist symbols, the modification of the law of functioning of the National Archives. A course of action is also advocated for future research and the regime of the archives, with an insistence on the necessity to grant full access to the archives of the regime. Finally, the last category of endorsed actions refers exclusively to education, and calls for the necessity to present the truth regarding the communist period in educational institutions, the corollary of which are the need for supporting the existing research infrastructure and the allocation of scholarships for researchers of the communist dictatorship.

While the *Final Report* fulfills both the function of performing a diagnostic and recommending what is it that has to be done given the nature of the verdict, it also strives to dismantle perceptions of the past. One of the main theses of the Report is formulated so as to attest the unitary nature of the regime, in opposition to claims of a discontinuity between the Dej and Ceaușescu periods. Another narrative the Report is situated against is that of what gets termed as the “myth of modernization under communism”; the Report also repudiates the idea of the 1989 Revolution being a coup d’etat or the result of a conspiracy. Moreover, the Report calls for the recognition of new symbolic loci of the collapse of the regime, most notably the recognition of the “Timișoara Proclamation” as the “true charter of the Revolution”.

Interviews with members of CPADCR brought to light a couple of essential aspects for understanding the form the *Final Report* took. All the interviewees accused the limited time they had available for research, and many of the shortcomings of the Report are attributed to this. A more important aspect pertains to the relationship between the members and experts within the Commission. While almost no details have been publicly released

about the way the actual research process was carried out,<sup>24</sup> interviewees suggest that most of the substantial work has been carried out by the experts. The interviewees also tend to link some of what has been denounced as the excessively emotional language or departures from the canons of academic writing to the members who were there as prominent figures of the Romanian cultural field but lacking the institutional credentials that would grant them the title of experts in the study of communism. Interviewees suggest that the experts did not feel they had the legitimacy to challenge the view of those who thought that the “moralizing voice” (Z., CPADCR member) or the “voice of the victims” should be brought to the Report. What happened therefore, in the words of one of the interviewees, was that the “rest of them”, i.e. experts, had to “collate” some of the material written by the members with the more rigorous, emotionally neutral analysis carried out by the experts (Z., CPADCR member), so that in the *Final Report* this tension between the two ways of describing and analyzing past events is maintained.

The same tension between two ways of relating to the supposedly ideal form of the Report is maintained on the level of the administrative discourse of the Report. The final recommendations of the Report are judged by one of the members as bearing the mark of the same emotional call for justice and the imprint of the moralizing tone of the victims, in disregard of the actual possibilities and functions of the law. “I spent half a day with Mr. Tismăneanu trying to explain him that there is no way the entire document could become an official document of the Romanian state and criticizing punctual recommendations” (Z., CPADCR member). The same interviewee describes the way in which a punctual critique of the legislative recommendations of the Report came to be ignored, paradoxically through its power of persuasion. Having accepted that the recommendations of the *Final Report* are

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<sup>24</sup> A notable exception is constituted by Levente Salat’s article “A Kommunizmus Romániai Öröksége És Az Erdélyi Magyarok” (2008), containing a detailed and insightful description of the research process for the section on the situation of the Hungarian minority.

unlikely to come into being as legislative tools, it was decided that at least the message should be then heard in its strongest form and that the call for moral redress should be made explicit.

Another aspect that was brought up recurrently in the interviews and public stands regards the access to archives granted to the researchers. While a larger than previously allowed access is acknowledged, a recurrent complaint is that the president's promise of unrestricted access to archival material was not met. Institutional barriers as well as the mentality of archives' employees are attributed to this. Access to the archives of the Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs or the Romanian Intelligence Service are brought up repeatedly as examples of institutions where the "interests are too strong" for researchers to have been able to obtain access to the desired material. The mentalities of archives' directors or other employees "who act as if they would be the owners of the archives" (G., CPADCR member) trying to secure personal privileges, are also denounced. The problem of unequal access to archival material, as one of the interviewees explains, is also reflected in the broader field of the already existing research on the communist past. Thus, because the Report relied to a great extent on the previous work of the coopted researchers and they are generally conditioned or guided in their work by the availability of historical material, some themes did not receive enough or barely any attention. Explaining the insufficient data on some of the periods covering the Ceaușescu regime or answering the questions regarding the absence of substantial research on the role of the military and the justice system are both linked to the restrictive nature of the law of archives and its reverberations in the field of historiography.

It thus becomes obvious that important silences were reproduced in the *Final Report* and that some can be located on the level of fact retrieval. An important observation here regards also the broader way in which archives are seen as central for reconstituting the past. While critical historiography has seriously questioned the use of written sources in establishing factual claims, such methodological reflexivity is notoriously absent from the

Report, which lacks even a separate section on methodology. The centrality of archives and a pervasive vision of them as the “repository of truth” is however confirmed both by recurrent comments of the members and the text of the Report itself. “A democratic Romania is one in which access to history, therefore to the archives, is free and unrestricted” (Tismăneanu et al. 2007:782), the Report reads. However, as O’Toole notes, “the act of record making can sometimes be more significant than the record resulting from that act” (2002:48) and the way in which the authority of a document in establishing facts is decided is in itself historically constructed. While the scope of this paper or the available data does not allow for a substantial discussion on the problem of the use of archival material, it is important to signal this as a problem that remains central to understanding the production of historical narratives. An exacerbated positivistic reading of archival material from the Romanian communist regime is symptomatic in its multiple uses. Numerous instances prove that when it comes to using the *Securitate* archives, for example, almost any critical scrutiny of the reliability of the material is suspended, and the reports of the same institution that is denounced as the most oppressive of the communist regime are seen as fully reliable, self-explanatory documents.<sup>25</sup> Such a reading naturally prevents the questioning of the process of production of written sources, as well as the uneven representation of different dimensions of the social within archival material. Or, rephrasing this in Trouillot’s terms, silences enter historical narratives in the moment of fact creation as well as in that of fact assembly, and any attempt to account for past events in full trust of archival material is bound to reproduce the very inequalities which are reflected in these primary levels of the constitution of historical facts.

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<sup>25</sup> A paradigmatic illustration of this can be found in the recent scandal surrounding the alleged collaboration with the *Securitate* of the literary critic Adrian Marino. Following the posthumous publication of his memoirs, a campaign of discrediting him through the publishing of details from his *Securitate* file ensued. A strong promoter of the attacks against Marino has been Vladimir Tismăneanu. This however is only one instantiation of the recurrent political use to which archival material, subordinated to a positivist reading, has been put.

### 3.2 Contesting the narrative. Drawing the boundaries of the field of discourse

The publication of the Report was met, as already suggested, with visible hostility by two parties in the opposition (PRM and PSD), while a campaign against the Report was also carried out by two dailies that conflated the theme with attacks aimed at president Bănescu. The Orthodox Church also issued several official statements in which it addresses the supposedly partisan descriptions of the collaboration of the Church with the communist regime. While these reactions received some media attention, they were to a great extent short lived and circumvented any substantial discussion regarding the Report and the work of CPADCR. Reactions coming from the political field were aimed mostly at denouncing individual incriminations in the Report as well as attacking the credibility of individual members of CPADCR through biographical details. Some attacks, as those coming from PRM, were indeed notoriously nationalist, orthodox and sometimes antisemitic in character.

It is only in the cultural field proper that the Report was subjected to more substantial criticism. On the one hand, a handful of articles were published in weeklies such as *Observator Cultural* and *Cultura*, while *22*, *Dilema Veche* and *Idei în Dialog* were the main platforms defenders of the Report used to address criticism. Several of the editorialists of the latter also wrote in defence of the Report and against its critics on their personal blogs. In addition to this the volume *Iluzia Anticomunismului- The Illusion of Anticommunism*, subtitled *Critical Readings of the Tismăneanu Report* (Ernu et al. 2008) is the only substantial volume that brings together 12 authors that aim to take a critical look at the *Final Report*. A closer look at this volume and the dynamics of its contestation reveals many of the assumptions and the characteristics of the cultural field in which the *Final Report* and the condemnation of communism occurred.

The volume itself is not a unitary one, and the 12 articles address the *Final Report* with various points of critique, within overall critical stances that range from obviously

supportive of the entire initiative (Andreescu 2008) to more radical distantations from the entire project (Cistelean 2008; State 2008; Țichindeleanu 2008). Within the entire volume, the major points of critique that are brought up include discussing the scientific inadequacies of the Report- the emotionally involved attitude-absence of scientific neutrality, the negligent conceptual grid, the ambiguous legal status (Andreescu 2008; Barbu 2008; Shafir 2008), its subordination to a political project under the aegis of president Băsescu and PDL (Abraham 2008; Barbu 2008), the absence of certain essential themes (the role of the military and the juridical system in the communist regime), as well as attempts that aim for a more radical ideological deconstruction of the Report as a tool for legitimizing dominant discourses (Cistelean 2008; State 2008). Interviews with the editors and some of the authors whose articles have been included in the volume confirm the fact that this was from the very beginning a loosely defined project, and that the initiative was grounded in the absence of any serious public debate surrounding the *Final Report*, in the feeling that there is a need to voice alternative memories of the communist past, and in the perceived duty of the “critical intellectual” as a critic of power and dominant discourses. The editors speak of their intention of not imposing a unitary ideological orientation on the volume, so that the diversity of the positions expressed in it is seen as programmatic. A tension between the acknowledgment of a “quasi-monopoly” or “hegemonic dominant discourse” in the form of right wing anticommunism in the Romanian cultural field and their own position within it marks the discourses of all the interviewees. While they all speak of their position as marginal they emphasize that this marginality does not automatically transform them into victims, but that as such they have limited resources for challenging the dominant discourses. With regard to the state of the right wing anticommunist consensus within the dominant fraction of the cultural field, they see the possibility of its effacing either through “natural erosion” (A.,

editor) or the natural progression of a discourse that frames itself as oppositional once “discredited by its association with power” (B., editor).

Regarding the authors of the volume interviews bring to light that while there is certainly no ideological consensus that marks their position takings, they see their association as the natural outcome of their speaking on behalf of the dominated pole of the cultural field. This position is understood by the authors themselves as simultaneously exclusionary and instrumental, with this perhaps being captured best in the way they regard the publishing of the volume at a publishing house outside Romania, located in Chişinău. The refusal on behalf of a significant number of publishing houses in Romania to publish the volume is interpreted, even in the introduction to it, as most likely due to the publishing houses’ lack of desire to publish “deviations from the national intellectual mainstream” (Ernu et al. 2008:5), while the act of publishing itself is attributed to a publishing house with “more courage” (p.5). Interviews with the authors bring to light that they try to draw their legitimacy from the very act of challenging authorized language, and in this they rely on the existence of a dominant discourse which they conjure. Yet, out of this arises the challenge of escaping what the authors term “victimization”, thus they also focus on detaching their critique from their position within the field and expressing it in terms of a broader understanding of genuine critical activity and the role of the critical intellectual (as journalist, writer, editorialist).

With *Iluzia Anticomunismului* being the only substantial contribution to a debate centered on the *Final Report* its ability to define the major points of contention was expected. However, the reception of the volume did not lead to any in depth debate, rather it was taken up as a reversed discussion on the legitimacy of anti-anti-communism. Most of the members of the Commission have not taken a public stand on the critics aimed at the Report. The main defender of the Report has been Vladimir Tismăneanu himself, and a number of people belonging to the same editorial and institutional circles. Vladimir Tismăneanu has signaled

himself, usually in highly eulogistic terms, most of the articles that aim to deconstruct the *Illusion of Anticommunism* and defend the *Final Report*. A number of recurrent themes in these articles can be identified. Among these are the basis of contestation (with the assumption that authors lack the scientific competence to challenge the *Final Report*),<sup>26</sup> the critique as an act aimed at gaining prestige through contesting public figures, critique as an act associated with rebellious, unknowledgeable youth, and the individual discreditation of authors through their institutional and political ties.<sup>27</sup> More importantly though, in the contestation and defence of the Report some of the previously unspoken assumptions are brought to the foreground.

It is indeed only through the act of contestation and through the circumscribing of the “heretical” ways of thinking that “the acceptable ways of thinking and speaking” the past become obvious. The analysis of the public stands and interviews with members of CPADCR confirms that the strongest assumption in which the production of the Report was embedded is that such an act can only be done within the confines of liberal ideology. The retrospective acknowledgment of this sometimes included references to this having been an outspoken premise from the moment of setting up the commission. However, a radiography of the discourse around the time of the setting up of CPADCR does not confirm this. Rather, the reframing of the project and the contestation of the Report revealed how only within the field of opinion that which was initially beyond question and unspoken came to light. If initially the Report was mostly seen as a neutral, scientific endeavor, its contestation implied the drawing of boundaries and identification of “heretical remarks as blasphemies” (Bourdieu

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<sup>26</sup> “Important is the qualification of those who criticize the Report. It is one to meet honest suggestions, it is a different thing to end up being mocked and treated as a rhapsodist by people without any credit in the field” (“Interviuri În Oglindă Cu Tismăneanu Vs. Ernu, Rogozanu Și Șiulea” 2008)

<sup>27</sup> See for example the position takings of Angela Furtună, Gheorghe Grigurcu or Mihail Neamțu, all of them described in highly eulogistic terms by Vladimir Tismăneanu. Recurrent in these are also the construction of the group of authors as unitary, their description as anti-anticommunists, accusations of negationism, an identification of the authors as the “neo-marxist”, “neo-gauchist” left embodying the resurgence of totalitarian ideas, accusations of ignorance and lack of empathy for the victims of communism.

1993:169). This meant that the limits of any acceptable discourse were set as those sharing the assumptions of liberal ideology, and that much of the effort to discredit critics was directed precisely towards identifying alternative voices as falling outside such a community of speech. Interviews with the members of CPADCR also confirm that some of the members saw the binary distinctions employed in the Report as the only legitimate classificatory scheme and moreover as the only available one. “If we want to talk about communism, we must talk about victims and torturers, we have no other available language” (L., CPADCR member), is a statement that captures the way in which the moral categories of the victims of communism were judged to be the only lens through which the past is approachable.

Notable is also the way in which the head of CPADCR chose to enter into dialogue with critics. Denouncing the act of critique in itself was done through describing it as an attempt to gain prestige through the association with established names. Also, public critics have been systematically addressed when “their violence went beyond the limit of what is tolerable”, which in practice meant that already marginal voices within the political and cultural field, or competing discourses that did not threaten in any way the dominant discourse were singled out. The group of authors associated with *The Illusion of Anticommunism* were labeled as anti-anti-communists, a classificatory strategy with a double effect. On the one hand it functioned to relegate the competing claims to the sphere of heretical discourse, portraying them as not falling within the boundaries of that which can be said. On the other hand the effect of nomination functioned so as to construct the idea of an existing threat within the cultural field posed by a reemergence of totalitarian ideas within the guise of neo-marxism, thus supporting the claim that the communist-anticommunist dichotomy corresponds to the actual structure of the cultural field.

### 3.3 Adjusting the past to the needs of the present

If the immediate function of CPADCR and its *Final Report* was to provide the president with the necessary proof for the condemnation of communism, its role did not end with the act of condemnation. The act of condemnation itself, in the form of the president's official declaration in front of the Parliament presented the conclusions of the Report while the president expressed his support for a number of the recommendations it formulated. Most of them are the ones related to memorialization and access to archives, an exception being the call for annulling political condemnations under the former regime. The status of the declaration itself is ambiguous, and it ultimately constitutes not a legal act, but a political one.<sup>28</sup> Its' status, as such, does not place it outside the realm of the symbolic gestures a regime takes in order to mark its rupture with the past. However, despite the disclaimer presented by the president in the very speech he condemned the communist regime, "I do not want to become "the President who has condemned communism" (Tismăneanu et al. 2007:18), the theme of the official condemnation of communism became a central one in the 2009 electoral campaign. At the top of the list of the realizations achieved during his first mandate, the president placed the condemnation of communism.

What is mostly significant though about this is that it marks a significant departure from the platform on which the president ran in the 2004 elections. The topics of decommunization and anticommunism were then not central, and moreover the president approached his own communist past through what was seen as an individual decision. Anticommunism was still within the realm of contingency, and the president did not have the instruments to frame anticommunism as a necessary position. The basis for breaking with the past was found to have sufficient grounding in subjective experience. However, as Vladimir

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<sup>28</sup> "Also in my mandate [...] I had the courage to go in front of the parliament with still a nostalgic majority and condemn the crimes of communism [...] It was not easy, I stirred the anger of the former regime, but I had the moral duty towards Romanians to do this and I did this without hesitating" (Băseșcu 2009)

Tismăneanu declares, “during the last three years, i.e. 2005-2008, Traian Băsescu has proven that he has internalized decommunization, the departure from communism, as a defining dimension of his presidency” (“Interviuri În Oglindă Cu Tismăneanu Vs. Ernu, Rogozanu Și Șiulea” 2008). It is this process of internalization that was supported by the legitimization granted by what is seen as a singular scientific verdict that offered the president the possibility to marginalize also competing claims within the anticommunist field. Traian Băsescu’s act of condemnation became construed as an exhaustive one, and as such similar attempts to break with the past became marginal. In opposition to what were described exclusively as symbolic gestures, Traian Băsescu got to be supported by the claim that the past is now outside the realm of debate, and that the *official* condemnation has decidedly closed a chapter from Romania’s history. From here on, the memory of the communist past and individual relationships to it do not constitute sufficient grounding for contesting or critiquing the Report and the verdict it supports. Moreover, under the heading of *nostalgia* all memories that do not concur with the official discourse are meant to be fought against, while for those who lack the memory of those times a pedagogical infrastructure is put into place.

The broader project of institutionalizing an official version of the communist past and the legitimate forms of remembering is reflected primarily in the recommendations for memorialization of the Report itself and confirmed by the development of events after the act of condemnation. The mandate of CPADCR, in a narrower formula, was extended so as to elaborate an encyclopedia of communism and members of CPADCR contributed to the publishing of a high school textbook for the study of communism. The developments surrounding IICCR, the institute set up under the patronage of the liberal government, best illustrate the ramifications of the politics of memory instantiated in the case of CPADCR. During a period between late 2009 and early 2010 IICCR was reorganized and merged with IMER, thus becoming the Institute for the Investigation for the Crimes of Communism and

the Memory of the Romanian Exile. The former president of IICCR, Marius Oprea, was laid off through a decision of the current prime minister, Emil Boc, president of PDL. Vladimir Tismăneanu was appointed president of the scientific council, while Ioan Stanomir and Mihail Neamțu were appointed as executive president, respectively scientific director. The most important members of the reorganized institute are also members of the academic council of the PDL think tank, with Vladimir Tismăneanu as the president of it. The new agenda of the Institute, as laid out in the first press conference organized, is focused around implementing the recommendations of the *Final Report* and makes explicit the assumptions which ground the official politics of memory. In the words of its executive president,

It is very important to fight a battle with regard to the future of the memory of communism and totalitarianism in this country. And it is not about winning the battle with those who already have a memory of communism, but it is about winning the battle with those who did not have a direct experience, with those for whom totalitarianism is rather associated with a positive image of the dictatorship, with a positive image of economic stability, the stability of the workplace, of an economic development which communism did not cease to evoke as one of its trump cards. ("Iiccmr Press Conference" 2010)

In the field of discourse, the doxa of the cultural field the representatives of which were chosen as the authorized voice of the past is revealed in the form of orthodoxy. Alternative memories of the past must be suppressed, and the only legitimate form of judging the past is through the categories of those who are judged to be its victims. With regard to the “strategy of communication”, the unique voice of IICCMER is designated in the person of Vladimir Tismăneanu.

The silences and mentions that enter the historical narrative through the selection of producers, procedures and themes function so as to mediate and reproduce the classificatory schemes of the self-designated victims of communism. A narrative which exceptionalizes

opposition but marginalizes the day to day experience of communism, sanctioned through the official discourse, can now function as a diagnostic, an explanatory framework and an administrative tool kit. If communism was illegitimate and criminal, and a double threat is maintained in the pervasiveness of communist mentalities and structures, both ideology and its incarnations must be fought against. In this, the realities of postsocialist relations and breakdowns can be concealed in the perpetuation of the communist-anticommunist opposition, while the privilege of speaking the truth is secured by the anticommunists. Those controlling the means of historical production are also in the position to nominate who is it that belongs to the community of liberal speech, i.e the anticommunist one.

## Conclusion

Understanding the implications of a constructed break with the past has been the guiding line of the analysis of the case of CPADCR. The selection of the instruments for officially framing the communist regime and the construction of the instrument itself, in the form of a historical analysis, reveal both silences and instrumental mentions. However, as Trouillot (1995:106) argues, “effective silencing does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural.” Through the selection of producers, evidence, themes and procedures an instrument of knowledge reproduces the classificatory schemes of those who control the means of historical production. It is only in the usage of an established historical narrative that its capacity to impose a particular view on the past with the authority of a universal one is revealed though.

The formation of CPADCR, as argued, reveals in its very creation its function as an instrument of displacing the past from the terrain of plural memories. Ascribing a verdict on the communist regime to the realm of expert knowledge functioned so as to construct the future verdict as irrefutable by the non-experts and contestable only by the holders of recognized cultural capital. In turns, in the act of official nomination the classificatory schemes which the production of the historical narrative reproduces lose their appearance as the expression of a particular view and gain the appearance of universality. Retracing the categories the *Final Report* aims to impose, as seen, can only be done through understanding the relationships between the fields at the intersection of which this was produced.

The act of speaking the truth about the past became the privilege of those in the dominant positions in the cultural field, a situation which created the premises for a verdict to function as nothing less than a self fulfilling one. The initiators of the call for condemnation were the ones who were given the authority to provide the evidence for the condemnation. As seen though, the two criteria of recognition that lead to the naming of the members of

CPADCR reproduced within the work of the commission the tension between two forms of symbolic capital. The holders of recognized expert knowledge in the communist past and symbolic capital originating in the claims to an anticommunist past confronted each other with two differing visions with regard to historical research: one which calls for scientific neutrality, and another which sees the moral categories of the victims of communism as intrinsic to understanding it; this tension is maintained in the analytical parts of the *Final Report* in which the voice of the experts and the ones of the members are clearly discernable. However, on the level of the diagnosis and administrative functions, the *Final Report* functioned so as to naturalize the classificatory schemes of the forgers of the anticommunist consensus. With the setting up a relationship of causality between the crimes of the communist regime and its ideology, identified with Marxism, and having declared communism as a regime alien to the values of the Romanian nation the conclusion that the Popular Republic of Romania was not Popular, was not a Republic, and was not Romanian (Tismăneanu et al. 2007:765) could be drawn. In this, the structural silences in the field of historical production (the silences entering the historical narrative in the creations of the archives and through the retrieval of material) were reproduced. So were the categories of those judged to be the victims of the regime. In the act of constructing communism as a relationship between victims and torturers while instrumentalizing the condemnation so as to create the premises for condemning competing narratives anticommunism as a contingent relationship was displaced into a necessary one.

Moreover, as the contestation of the *Final Report* reveals, the historical narrative brought into the official verdict functions so as to create its own opponents. In the political field PSD continues to be identified as the neocommunist opposition, while dissatisfaction with the breakdowns of the capitalist state are filed under the head of nostalgia, thus the need for a pedagogical project aiming to construct “a true” memory of the communist regime can

be reinforced. In the cultural field the drawing of boundaries around that which can be said and constitutes acceptable discourse is manifest. The contestation of the *Final Report* was met with constructing the critics as falling outside the boundaries of the liberal community of speech. Constructing the threat of a reemergence of totalitarian ideas in the guise of neo-marxism functions so as to reproduce the anticommunist-communist opposition. It is as such that the double imperative of remembering and not repeating the mistakes of the past is revealed as a project of imposing a particular view of the past which reproduces the classificatory schemes of those who control the means of historical production. Under the power of formulas of erasure and banalization the experiences of those who have not been classified as victims of communism do not find expression in the historical narrative. Under the power of official nomination, the historical narrative functions so as to nominate possible alternative memories as imminent threats thus reinforcing the very scheme of classification it relies on. The diagnostic and the administrative function of the official nomination are here joined so as to impose the anti-communist – communist dichotomy on the realities of the capitalist state. The nostalgic have now committed the double sin of having forgotten the past and threatening the future, while the constructed past becomes the disclaimer of those in power in the present.

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