

**THE REPRESENTATIVES OF REPRESSION IN
COMMUNIST ROMANIA: THE SHREWD
INVESTIGATOR, THE SADISTIC TORTURER AND THE
BALCANISED CLOWN**

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There are three characters regarding power in the negative portrait gallery of the Romanian Gulag (1945-1964): the investigator, the torturer and the guardian. Although there is a performer in torture (called torturer), this role can be played by the investigator as well as the guardian (and sometimes even by individuals on a higher hierarchical level, such as a political officer or a prison governor or the head of the concentration camp, etc.) I will not deal with the "brains" of repression in Romania, because their portrait was accurately drawn by Vladimir Tismăneanu in almost all of his books. The political prisoner sometimes looked upon the guardian, the investigator and the commander of the prison as "guinea pigs" and watched them with the same curiosity as the guardians (and his superiors) watched the convicts. Before analysing the structure of this caste and the way in which, similar to a Janus bifrons black "comedy" forks into a brutal and sadistic and a hilarious mode, we must say that in the Romanian Gulag there were also human representatives of the repression mentioned by many memoir-writers. There were also extreme, Dostoievskian cases of converts (the investigator Christianised by Richard Wurmbrand or the guardian converted to anti-communism by one of the prison comrades of Ion Ioanid and, not to forget a romantic case, the nonconformist daughter of commander Lazăr from the Peninsula colony who became a protector of political prisoners). Oana Orlea also writes about a woman guardian on whom she tried her chance of Pygmalion. The majority of the "normal" guardians were sanctioned if they did not apply torture and brutality with

originality and diabolic ambition. Thus there was a terror of the terrorisers, easy to understand in a system of repression which had to raise fear on both sides of the wall; consequently, there were cases of executioners becoming victims because of their structural inability of being executioners. N. Steinhardt, obsessed by the excessive zeal of some torturers classifies the guardians into zealous and moderate, cruel-inventive and humane, underlining however that the existence of moderate guardians does not prove the normality of the communist regime. On the contrary, exactly because the moderates are exceptions, “good in the communist regime is only accidental, it can only be achieved by roundabout methods, by roundabout methods and illegally, illegally that is in nonconformity with principles, in an unprincipled way (conclusion: there is a discrepancy of principle between the idea of Good and communism)”.

Ion Ioanid also speaks about kind guardians who facilitated the life of political prisoners. This depended sometimes on a temporarily kinder regime of detention and an atmosphere of apparent legality. (The 1956 Revolution in Hungary, for example, led to speculations among the prisoners, discussions of strategies and futurologic exaltations. Under the shock of the first beneficial stage the guardians lost their infallibility becoming simple “men on duty” while the prisoners became their equals and later, their superiors in conscience. After the tragical outcome of the Revolution in Hungary the guardians became again despotic, the prison was under siege and abuses continued, corporal punishment being officialised.) Times were changing, the new, more stylish guards replaced the old guards whose primitive mentality became strident for international public opinion. We are not pleading for the executioners but trying to respect one of the specific rules of Alexander Soljenitzin, that of presenting evil righteously.

Constantin C. Giurescu deals in his book mainly with the guardians whom he classifies in function of their behaviour towards the prisoners as scoundrels (an eloquent example was the degenerate named *Pithecantropus Erectus*) and neutrals (sometimes behaving as humans). The scoundrels are divided according to a moral criteria, into brutes and rogues, numbered in a

shortened form as B and R: “Thus, we had a large series of Bs (from brute!) such as B1, B2, B3, B4 and a lesser series of Rs (from rogue!) namely, R1 and R2.” Corneliu Coposu sees the majority of the guardians as some “Asiatic troglodytes”, lombrosiens, mentally retarded. Teohar Mihadaş’ vision of the executioners is similar to that of Constantin C. Giurescu. He sees in the gallery of satraps of the Security Service some brawny hybrids whom he ironically calls “Herculians”, maneaters, or describes them in a choleric manner in a plebeian bestiary (just like the informers), as snake, hyena, fox and louse, animals with “snouts” and “hooves” (a sign of the animalic and of the devil); they are slaves of the body and the pig-like onomatopoeic, in a variety which reaches the scatological. The guardians, investigators, political officers and prison directors were savage like inhabitants of another planet; they had “a real orgasm of power”.

Generally, members of the repressive apparatus in communist Romania were wrapped in a malefic myth: they were presented most often as some nocturnal beings, “black men” in leather jackets. On the level of the collective unconscious communists (and the whole hierarchy of the repressive apparatus) were strangers from nowhere, invaders, aggressive intruders. They were described as members of a bestiary of hidden creatures, vermins and devourers. It was not incidental that labyrinths, corridors and subterraneans were parts of a well-devised scheme of prisons and buildings of the Security Service.

One of the characters of Marcel Petrişor who went through re-education, remembered in delirium all his torturers, seeing in them the beast from Apocalypse. Marcel Petrişor portrays such an individual who proves to be an animalic hybrid from a fantastic bestiary: “A body of a pig and head of a gorilla with its forehead like the tail of a rat, with bloody eyes and a speech which was articulated only when he was speaking to his superiors, in moments of grace.” The memoir-writer also remembers torturers who had nightmares about their victims seeing the prison as hell and then repenting, as well as guardians who willingly pacted with the prisoners.

Women prisoners have different views about the investigator-torturer-guardian series. Oana Orlea gives a varied answer regarding the victim-torturer relation: in her opinion the behaviour of the torturer depended on the psychology of the victim, thus there were highly brutal as well as lenient torturers, learned and notoriously gross, fanatics and blasé. But all of them had the structure of the torturer: although the level of their malice varied, they belonged to the same dark content of repression. Oana Orlea raises the issue of the need for the written confession of torturers, not that there would be an inflation of the confessions of victims but because after prison life, torturers are viewed with indulgence: the Romanians tend to excuse their torturers” (and then, the written confession of torturers would complete, more or less honestly, the story of the Romanian Gulag).

Lena Constante, arrested abusively during the Stalinist type show-trial against Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu had a terrifying gradual inquiry, mastered by furious little gods who either dosed her terror or created false hopes, bringing her to the threshold of a schizoid division of personality: a humiliated, suffering and innocent woman on the one hand and a witness-woman, wanted by the accuser. The guardians are also presented in a nuanced way: there are perfect sadists, conformist brutals acting out of fear of denunciation and, rarely, tamed guardians, conscious of their sinful profession. Lena Constante explains the inhumanity in women prisons by communist fanaticism, the narrow-mindedness of the guardians, the intoxication of power, complexes of inferiority and hierarchical fear (individual pathology also adds to these). The author analyses the bestialisation of guardians from a psychological perspective, first the monsters camouflaged from within and then the monsters incarnated visibly. Otherwise, Lena Constante has a strong-minded opinion about the issue of forgiving the torturers: even if those from the basis of the pyramid of terror can be partially absolved, those from the “top” must not be forgiven. The author admits that she can forgive but she does not have the right to forgive for the suffering of other people: “However, I believe that all of us who suffered in our body, heart and spirit, are very far from forgiving the torturers, and rightly so.”

Forgiving the torturers is thus only rhetorical and, despite the non-Christian tone of this statement, the words of Lena Constante have their logic.

Adriana Georgescu knew unscrupulous torturers, the most famous was Nicolski, the “rat-man”, mentor of the re-education centre in Pitești. During her imprisonment the advice of perfidious well-wishers altered with physical pains administered by torturers excited by class hatred and the intransigent femininity of their victim. Costin Merișca mentions that the servants of the repressive apparatus manifested a “masculine brutality” towards women and young girls especially, on a linguistic level first, then in a tactile-tortionary way. The cry of tortured women was his most painful auditive memory from the prison.

George Tomaziu says that throughout his detention he was obsessed by the Poliphemus eye of the guardian, the omniscient and omnipotent eyeball which doubled the eternal blinding lightbulb in the cell; the eye of God from the Christian iconography became the spying and punitive eye of the guardian. Oana Orlea also speaks about supervision through the peep hole, “the eye of an evil God who hides his face and has absolute power over the prisoner”.

The advice to forget the suffering in prison is hypocritical because only remembering can strengthen the victims and give a new meaning to their life. Elisabeta Rizea who feels the imperious need to speak about the pain and talk about the suffering, blames her torturers but her judgement is akin to that of Vitoria Lipan. Studying the psychology of the guardians Oana Orlea observes that there was a ritualistic intensification of violence: first the constant and unbalancing pre-torture, then spontaneous and casual torture.

The false-angelic investigator must also be mentioned (the guardian, though a brutal character, was more honest; he could only be bad or moderate but never a hypocrite), as both Nicolae Mărginenau and Ion Ioanid remember him. This type of investigator mimed good-will but he had a harmful role, because it was based on the subterranean notion of oral re-education: “We do not want to destroy people, we just wish to take them back to the

straight path.” Investigators followed the typical procedure of modifying the prisoner’s declaration according to a self-incriminatory standard. N. Steinhardt observed that this was similar to the procedure used with Jeanne d’Arc, stylising in Latin the declarations given in French: the Romanian communist investigator was also a dangerous stylist. Ion Ioanid had also met a well-mannered, clever and tenacious investigator who gradually captured the psychology of his victim. Sometimes it is the “angelic” investigator who provokes the surrender of the prisoner. Ion Ioanid meditates lucidly on this adversary who has all the trumps and on the relationship of coexistence between the investigator and the investigated person. Ion Ioanid trained himself for the confrontation in a Spartan manner both morally and psychologically although he knew that the victory would be that of the investigator, at least on the surface, while he would have no right to appeal: “The relation between torture in investigation (moral, physical, short or long term torture) and the physical and moral resistance of the prisoner cannot be determined beforehand. Everything depends on the way in which the investigator weighs the investigation, administers and doses tortures. In my opinion, the perfect investigator theoretically always wins the party, even if he has to do with the most resistant and experienced prisoner.” In *Românii după ’89. Istoria unei neînțelegeri (Romanians after 1989. The History of a Misunderstanding)* Alina Mungiu calls the investigator of the Constantin Noica case exactly such a subtle, intellectualised but perfidious though “human” type. The idea of the victim and “angelic” torturer couple is used and devised by the eminencies of the repression only in the special case of pure intellectuals who have an inner fragility (such as Constantin Noica) or intransigent political leaders who cannot be treated by cruel methods. The idea of the investigator and investigated person couple gains a malicious load because the prisoner gives in (if he does) because of a certain politeness and self-content. The “happy” days of investigation of Noica are in fact the days of his debasement sanctioned by collaboration. It is not the intelligence and reciprocal respect for the intellect of the other that should prevail, but the principle represented by each of them, the victim

and the torturer. Viorel Gheorghită also confesses about this type of investigator who misleads. He describes the captatio benevolentiae-type framework (“apparently elevated, bright surroundings, inviting a dialogue. Nothing of the soldierly rigidity, nothing disagreeable, nothing threatening”) and the torturer who is well-mannered, not brutal (“intelligent, cynical, cruel, but a gentleman”).

Belu Zilber once met a refined and learned investigator, and this was fatal for him because it led to his treason. Belu Zilber felt, excessively spiritualising his relations with this investigator that together with his partner they played the roles of Rubasov and Ivanov from Arthur Koestler’s *Darkness at Noon*. Later on, grabbed by an ancestral Judaic fear he considered the investigator a Jahve, an omnipotent but always an earthly and subterranean, not celestial god. Speaking about the investigators of the future he presents a Kafkaesque case, a clerk obsessed with files (files are the paper doubles of the individual, the synthesised and verifiable man) who exposes his paranoid belief that the time will come when the whole population of Romania will be checked by files, being blindly subdued to a collective plan of depersonalisation and manipulation. The existence of individuals will thus be proved only by files that are in the hands of demiurges (there are fifteen types of files succinctly inventoried by the author).

Ion D. Sîrbu tells a similar case, referring to the omnipotence of the Security Service as a mechanism of creating files: it created files for “enemies” as well as the leaders of the country, in a paranoid drunkenness of power: “Even Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, the leader of the Romanian Communist Party during 1947-1963, has a file which he is afraid of, said the same Enoiu. We can throw light on it whenever we want. Nobody is more powerful than we are!”

The investigator-investigated relationship is studied anatomically by N. Steinhardt. The fear and weakness of the victim increases the voluptuousness of the aggressor, says the memoir writer. He points out two psychological structures: the skillful, theoretical torturer and the perfect victim: “The secret of terror is perhaps to make the terrorised provoke the terrorist to ask

for more and more, to create a close collaboration between the two, as between partners in the sexual act, or the surgeon and patient, to oblige the victim to reconstruct the process of thinking of the terrorist and attribute more cruel intentions and more subtle reasoning to him than he really has.” The prisoner becomes vulnerable when the “complex of delinquency” (as Dina Balş calls it) is inculcated in him. Being candid and impressionable he sometimes lets himself impregnated by the sinfulness which is mentally injected in him by members of the repressive apparatus.

According to Paul Goma, the most dangerous moment of the investigation is that of the collaboration between the investigated person and the investigator based on the “friendship” of tired people: one of them tired of being tortured, the other tired of torturing. At that moment a fatal communion springs up: “There comes a moment in which the investigator and the investigated stop being enemies, combatants or adverseries: they do not confront each other, no longer try to suppress, destroy or cheat the other, but begin to collaborate, striving together to find a solution, to reach a haven.”

In his ingenious book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* Michel Foucault underlines the role of the carnal amnesty giver (in the case of torture) which was once assumed by the king. In the modern prison this function is held by a degenerate, grotesque “king” nuanced from the hierarchically inferior level (the guardian) to the superior (the director of the prison). The “king” of the 20th century Romanian communist prison was sometimes the executioner, the performance torturer. Although the theoretical superpower (justice) did not indicate aberrations in torture and suffering, the infrapower of the small “kings” and agents could go beyond any limit, without restrictions. Justice and penalty were impersonal and abstract spheres while the infrapower which operated inside the prison was concrete and personal (see the anarchy of the Piteşti phenomenon where even the range of torturers was chaotic: the prisoner Ţurcanu became equal in function with the director of the prison); the guardian (and the whole hierarchical structure following him) usurped the former judicial power of the king. In the case of the Romanian Gulag the

negative revelation can be carried on: not only was the king degraded but his clown, the jester, too, was no longer a philosopher but a vulgar plebeian (at least Paul Goma pleads for this hypostasis). Moreover, the “king” was sometimes his own jester, an anamorphic and experimental character. Janus bifrons was represented on a practical-punitive level in the repressive regime in Romania both by a torturer, a perfectionist of pain and a balcanised jester. Besides the refined primitivism (here we cannot get rid of paradoxes), aggressiveness and lack of scruples, the communist punitive apparatus in Romania also had this distinctive note of the repressive, ridiculous, plebeian, hybrid jester, a combination of Balkanism and hilarious coarseness.

Paul Goma analyses the language spoken by members of the repressive apparatus: the superiors spoke an almost intelligible even if substandard language, while the intermediaries and the illiterate inferiors spoke a mangled, onomatopoeic language with guttural sounds resembling the Neanderthal man. It was a rash and ugly language, remnant of a dirty language, forerunner of the “wooden language” which made a career in communism. Writing about this, Françoise Thom (*Le langage de bois*) refers mainly to an alienated, empty, Orwellian, ideologised language which underwent a “teratological mutation”; if this was still a language of the mind, it was doubled by another one, a language of the body, swarmy, subhuman, animalic, poisoned by humours and instincts, a low language, a language of dejections. The manicheism in the the wooden language degraded into the language of the body: words were always visceral and aggressive. This language of the body must not be identified with the metaphor of organism mentioned by the French researcher in connection with communist ideology. The language of the body belongs indeed to the hypostasis of the wooden language as a tool of terror, not an impersonal language (as that of the slogans) but a highly personal and concrete language. Members of the repression apparatus in Romania used with predilection coleric mixtures of adjectives and nouns in which hyperbole was mixed with the injurious style belonging to a decayed grotesque. If man exists through language,

then this new language and especially its abject-bodily part creates an under-man.

Braggart and haughty, the jester of repression, is part of a series of caricatures which borders not so much on the comic (which is not characteristic to the Gulag) but the absurd. Otherwise, Paul Goma excels in creating the linguistic portrait of his torturers, his sadic guardians at Gherla (1958) and the rascal investigator at Rahova (1977), the neo-Stalinist amateur of puzzles. Corneliu Coposu also gives evidence of the trivial language of torturers, the “excessive outrage and oaths” which also prove their bestial competence. This is the power of language, the power to name in a perverted sense because this power does no longer belong to the priest-king or the artist but the torturer. Torture itself which morbidly unites the two partners is perceived by Paul Goma in auditive terms. In Gherla he presents the passage of the tortured through several stages of uttering pain, from a howl to a death rattle, whimpering (or yelping) to the final silence parallel with the grunts, pantings and groans of the torturing guardians. Other memoir-writers also give proof of this “Satanic symphony”.

The grotesqueness of the representative of the repressive apparatus in the Communist Romania can be conceived in terms of punitive bodily violence as well as psychological violence. One of the shocking details mentioned by the memoir writers is a body search ending in an anal search humiliating and degrading the prisoner as well as a spritual violation even to death.

The Romanian torturer became famous through an aberrant phenomenon which yields to psychoanalysis. Re-education at Pitești was considered by Țurcanu himself a shock method and it consisted of transforming the victims into executioners, experimenting with hybrids through systematic dehumanisation. “During the Pitești experiment the category of the innocent eyewitness was simply suppressed”, says Virgil Ierunca. The performer of this phenomenon was Eugen Țurcanu (with a group of torturers), a Machiavellian torturer himself who fascinated even his victims. Virgil Ierunca sees in Țurcanu a Verhovenski (the Dostoievskian character in Demons) taken

beyond the limit of evil, and a second Marquis de Sade. Other memoir-writers see him as a Romanian Doctor Mengele. Țurcanu is the torturer par excellence, in flesh and bones, so that his “score” is rather that of Mengele. In the eyes of the re-educated on the verge of schizophrenia, Țurcanu was an adored executioner, even after re-education was over, a terrifying and at the same time protecting god; the model re-educated could not accept his death and considered him living forever. We must say however that few of those who participated in the Pitești phenomenon were structural executioners (with the exception of the first series of re-educated), the majority being conjunctural torturers, torturers by an instinct of self-preservation or individuals forced to be torturers. The new-man, the object of re-education by blood, was a depersonalised individual, a robot, a virtual torturer (although there were also individuals who were recovered after re-education). During the ominous years of re-education in the Pitești prison between 1949-1952, Țurcanu compiled a file of almost 2000 pages in which he inventoried and classified tortures, adding observations about the psychological and corporal resistance of victims. Helped by a series of executioners and mimetic disciples (who did not pass through exposure and black confession and who did not accuse themselves, being in the hypostasis of degenerate “purifiers”), Țurcanu experimented with innovative forms of torture, listed in the macabre file which disappeared together with the execution of its author. Without direct reference to the Pitești phenomenon, Paul Goma says that the mode of torture was in direct proportion with the level of dehumanisation of the torturer. Goma underlines the strange picturesqueness of the way the Romanian torturer created torture: the exoticism of torture depended on the inexhaustible inventiveness of the torturer tasting the pains of his “fellow” (otherwise, the tortures described by Paul Goma depended on the inertia or sadistic agility of the executioner).

However, there were also women-torturers endowed with a sadism focussed on the torture of genitals as though the castrating rituals of the goddess Cybele would have still found an exotic and chance accomplishment in the Romanian Gulag. Their

maliciously aphrodisiac ardour (because they were women-comissars, investigators first of all), is worthy of a psychoanalytic investigation which would focus on the hypostasis of the woman who has equal rights with men regarding violence and wildness, and on the pleasure of humiliating virility (whether the torturer is feminine or masculine). Some women torturer-investigators have practised their “art” on women prisoners too; in this case their torturing zeal was motivated by various complexes of inferiority.

Radu Ciuceanu has an interesting observation about torturers from an ethnic and hierarchic point of view: while the Soviets were in Romania, there was a perfidious rivalry between them and the Romanians, because the Soviet master-torturers did not consider Romanians a similar caste but instead obedient and zealous members of a people in slavery. Viorel Gheorghită compares the technique of fascist torturers with that of Romanian torturers and in his opinion there is a difference in mentality and civilisation: fascists are exact and rigid but not profaners while Romanians are zealous, inventive and depraved.

In the case of the Pitești phenomenon we have already dealt with the idea of the satanised executioner, therefore we must mention the opinion of Tzvetan Todorov (*Confronting the Extreme. Victims and Torturers in the 20th Century*) which, referring to torturers in the Nazi camps (mostly) and Soviet camps rejects the idea of the monstrous torturer. Although he is allergic to the pompousness of evil, he admits that “evil is the main character of the concentration camp literature”; he does not see the executioners as beasts (this image seems to him inadequate) but considers them mediocre, depersonalised and obedient clerks. If still there is a minority of sadists, the majority is conformist and normal even if robot-like. The demonisation of executioners is an artifice, says Todorov, because they are not diabolical but normal. Evil is delivered not out of sadism (although there are exceptions), but because of blind submission and egotism. Otherwise, Todorov differentiates between the (rare) sadism of torturers (this is of sexual origin) and the drunkenness of power, underlining the latter. In the case of Nazi torturers the toughness of behaviour belongs to a German ideal of aggressive virility; in the case of communists it

has to do with indoctrination. The difference between nazi and communist torturers is linked to the impersonalisation of the crime: communist torturers do not have a mediator between them and their victims – there are no gas-chambers to depersonalise victims as well as torturers. The crime of communist torturers is more direct and personalising. Evil, Todorov concludes, comes from the system to which these executors of death subordinate themselves. Therefore the Holocaust and the Gulag could be the product of any totalitarian society maybe not even Nazi or Soviet; any other people subject to totalitarianism could have a Holocaust and a Gulag. Within every individual there is a torturer and a victim; whether the individual becomes a torturer or a victim and remains thus frozen in a single position, depends on the totalitarian context, too.

What is the emotional relation of the confessing victim to its former torturer or investigator, when the tragical events have lost their actuality? Is it possible to forgive the torturers? Answers vary from N. Steinhardt's Christian pity, the attitude of Teohar Mihadaş who does not accuse anyone but himself, the individual inability of Lena Constante to forgive and to the verdict in the manner of Vitoria Lipan and Elisabeta Rizea. Another memoir-writer says: "I forgive but do not forget." Some do not formulate a direct verdict but appeal to the commandment of Nicolae Iorga: "Who forgets, does not deserve", which was re-actualised by Viorel Gheorghită who spoke about the need for a preventive memory. Richard Wurmbrand whose missionary vocation was primordial, does not raise the issue of forgetting or forgiving the torturers but loving them, because "We can hate the sin but love the sinner nevertheless". Paul Goma pleads for non-forgiveness and the trial of torturers, as well as non-forgetting starting from the moment of being tortured: "and I have made up my mind never to forget, not to take revenge but not to forget and, mainly, NOT TO REMAIN SILENT". Another confessor proposes the imitation of the Judaic legal-punitive model after the Nazi Holocaust and H.R. Patapievici (Politice) also speaks about the need for the tenacious and imperious memory of the Romanians after the Jewish model. In his essays (*Cerul văzut prin lentilă – The Sky Through Lenses*)

Patapievici underlines that torturers can only be forgiven if they expiate for their sins, departing from their evil. If they go unpunished they cannot be forgiven. As to the victim, Patapievici formulates a clear code for him too: “the victim does not have the right to practice angelism towards the torturer”. Ion D. Sirbu even suggests an ethic portrait of the victim and the torturer in general, classifying them in parallel and differentiating them so that they can never be confounded. He also proposes forgiving the torturers with the condition of their repentance and the existence of a pillory: “I believe in forgiving the sinner with the condition that he repents. I do not ask to behead those who have broken the norms of rights and the moral law but I expect their sins to be exposed on walls and howled from loudspeakers not to be repeated ever again.” Other memoir-writers discuss forgiving the torturers starting from the Christian exclamation “Forgive them, God, for they don’t know what they are doing” and contradict this because the torturers were not simple robots but they zealously personalised torture, feeling accomplished through evil, knowing therefore what they had done. N. Steinhardt, a thinker of solutions of resistance in concentration camps finds solutions for “torturers” who would avoid evil, but apart from the first one (resignation) these are all phantasmagorical: becoming monks and committing suicide. Corneliu Coposu considers the penal punishment of torturers a rhetorical sanction because “it is not the condemnation of people which is important but the condemnation of certain ideas.” Otherwise Corneliu Coposu considers the majority of the torturers pathologically irresponsible, people who should be treated in asylums instead of being incarcerated. In his opinion their status is that of under-man.

Some political prisoners accuse their torturers, others not, but one thing is sure: the moral authors and actual creators of repression in Romania did not repent in the loneliness of their own conscience. It is exactly their unrepentance which is the catalyst of the memory of former victims. However, getting rid of an ataraxy generated in the consciousness of the Romanian people also makes this memory necessary.

Hannah Arendt gives a clever explanation regarding torturers in totalitarian societies (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*), though she refers especially to Nazi torturers, but Soviet torturers too: she thinks that “there are crimes which cannot be punished by people and cannot be forgiven. When the impossible was made possible, it became the absolute evil, unpunishable as well as unforgivable.” The new torturer of the 20th century is incompatible with the forgiveness or pity of his victims. He is ineffable because he is not human, anymore

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