

The Securitate File as a Record of *Psuchegraphy*

Cristina Plamadeala

In the 1960s, Romanian theologian and former political prisoner Antonie Plamadeala drafted a manuscript describing his experience with the Securitate, the Romanian secret police, and the terror of being under surveillance. Plamadeala wrote his story in the guise of a novel, *Trei Ceasuri în Iad* [Three Hours in Hell], in which he also sought to describe the dread and fear he felt in the Romania of the 1950s and 1960s to the point of confusion, losing grasp on reality, and eventually losing touch with his authentic self. As Plamadeala wrote in a 1964 letter addressed to his friends, the human being under communism is “obliged to simulate to the maximum, until he gets to think that he no longer is subject to simulation, but he is authentic.” This type of violence is “so extreme,” Plamadeala further pointed out, “that you [eventually] lose your capacity to understand” (“Letter” 234).¹

Biographic mediation is a mode of looking at life through the lens of an external bureaucratic authority. In this essay, I examine one type of biographic mediation that I refer to as a *psuchegraphic* profile on someone, carried out to discover what would make someone break. In communist Romania, this type of life scrutiny and rewriting were employed by Romania’s secret police to prime its informers and other members of its surveillance network. In order to examine how Plamadeala’s novel relates to the concept of *psuchegraphy* discussed here, I will explain how the plot of his novel develops around a man named Peter Ghast. *Trei Ceasuri în Iad* is about a man with three names and two identities: that of Peter Ghast and that of Anton Adam, who ends up feeling like a combination of the two—as Adam-Ghast. Peter Ghast is his identity according to the identification papers he received when dropped at the train station of the city of R. in a confused and deplorable state. Anton Adam is the person he feels he is, although he has no proof for it. Throughout the entire book, the protagonist struggles to understand himself. The word “struggle” may be an understatement here, as the title of the book suggests an internal turmoil that the author equates with living in hell. This man’s sentiments, memories, and feelings point toward an identity that no one, even his mother, fiancée, or

best friend, is able to recognize. Only the so-called “crazy Carl,” described by everyone in the novel as eccentric because of his audacity to be himself, is able to recognize him. He is the only one not afraid to tell the truth about the fear and despair the citizens of the city of R. experience. The rest of the characters in the novel wish they could be like Carl but cannot. The city of R., a metaphor for Romania at the time of the writing of the novel in the 1960s, is a dystopian nightmare: everyone is afraid of everyone else, and they are all afraid to speak their truth.

The main character is told that he underwent a life-saving brain transplant operation while fighting a war. Dr. Murnau, who performed the operation, replaced his brain with that of a history teacher by the name of Peter Ghast. According to Dr. Murnau, the brain transplant was necessary to save his life due to injury attained during the war combat. The novel begins with the protagonist’s being dropped at the train station of the city of R., shortly after his surgery. After facing a series of humiliations in trying to convince his loved ones that he is indeed Anton Adam, the protagonist abruptly leaves the city of R. for the unknown—hopeless and powerless. The reader never finds out where he goes. Carl goes after him, looking for answers about this man’s past, and what he discovers confirms Adam-Ghast’s convictions about himself. The novel’s main character was always Anton Adam, and he never had brain surgery. He underwent, instead, such a drastic plastic surgery that he became unrecognizable not only to his loved ones, but also to himself.

Told in a cryptic and allegorical manner, Antonie Plamadeala’s story of the struggles of Anton Adam is a story of the Securitate reeducating a person with the goal of changing that person’s authentic identity and convictions to fit the interests and demands of the regime. In this essay, I describe the mechanisms involved in gathering biographical data as akin to a surgical mode of personality alteration because it aims to reconstruct life choices, relationships, and self-concepts through surveillance. I call this mode of life scrutiny and rewriting *psuchegraphy*. The work of collecting biographical data on Securitate targets sought clues about a person’s core beliefs, personality, character, and identity—in short, the person’s “soul,” which the ancient Greeks called the *psuche* (ψυχή).² This data collection aimed to discover a person’s “vulnerable point” (*punct vulnerabil*), to use the exact language of a Securitate instruction manual on how to recruit informers (“Criterii” 10).

Once someone was identified for recruitment, this person had to be studied: their history, personality, friends, foes, and life goals were all under scrutiny. In Securitate files, the expression *a te fixa asupra unei persoane pentru a fi luata în studiu și verificată* (to set eyes on a person for them to be studied and verified) suggests that one appears to be attracted to collaboration (“Nr. 10972” 55). The Securitate examined a person as much as possible, as if placing them under a microscope. I argue that this kind of analysis was a precursor to recruitment and therefore constitutes a particular genre of life writing that uses biographic mediation to reorient personal desires toward state collaboration. Working with a series of Securitate files currently stored at the National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives (CNSAS) located in Bucharest and Popesti-Leordeni, Romania, this essay explores

the “slow violence,” to use the words of Rob Nixon (2), experienced by individuals in the process of being studied, evaluated, assessed, recruited, and then handled by the Securitate once joining the police’s surveillance network (*rețeaua informativă*). As it will be shown in this essay, the work of creating someone’s *psuchegraphic* profile is a form of biographic mediation. Defined by Ebony Coletu as “any structured request for personal information that facilitates institutional decision-making about who gets what and why” (384), biographic mediation, in the case of the Securitate, transformed ordinary human beings into active collaborators of the communist state by means of threats and promises of resource allocation to alter life trajectories.

Romania’s Communist Era: A Brief Historical Account

In Romania, communist power was established in the winter of 1947. Law 363 abolished the country’s previous constitutional monarchy and forced its then monarch, King Michael, to abdicate, thereby forging the establishment of the communist regime that mimicked closely the Soviet system, especially in the use of terror by the Securitate to eliminate opposition and dissent (Roper 19; Vatulescu 24).³ The specific tactics used, however, varied over time. In the first two decades of communism (1947–1965), as Lavinia Stan maintains, the Securitate, along with the Communist Party and the country’s leader, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, “engaged in systematic campaigns of human rights infringements that often involved murder, terror and deportation” (7).⁴ When Nicolae Ceaușescu came to power in 1965, following Dej’s death, the Securitate’s terror methods became more “subtle,” to quote Stan once again, which did not mean less noticeable: a significant portion of Romania’s population was subject to surveillance.⁵ Roughly one out of three adult Romanians “appeared in the Securitate’s general registry” in 1965, according to Cristina Vatulescu (6). New changes and recruiting polices were adopted shortly after, with collaborators emerging as a “newly established category” in 1968 (Neagoie-Plesa 13). With these changes, the Securitate managed to become more efficient while simultaneously instilling in people an overwhelming fear and suspicion of being under surveillance, mediated by a network of informers (*informatori* or *agentură*), residents (*rezidenți*), and support people (*persoane de sprijin*), who occupied the lower strata of the surveillance pyramid (“Index”; Neagoie-Plesa). While informers worked on a part-time basis and were recruited by Securitate officers (*securiști*) after rigorous background checks, residents helped manage the informers, lower-level collaborators, and support people. Residents also served as assistants to liaison officers (“Index” 6–7).

With such an elaborate and multilevel surveillance scheme, the Romanian communist regime undermined the possibility of neighborly trust. Distrust was activated to destroy lives, separate families, and enable the murder of thousands, especially in the Stalinist era (1947–65).⁶ Distrust regulated conduct among citizens and primed their emotions for recruitment. Considering the entire

communist period in Romania, Cristina Petrescu and Dragos Petrescu equate life in Romania during these decades with the so-called “Pitești syndrome” (502), which alludes to the notorious and brutal Pitești prison experiment that sought to transform political prisoners, mostly former Iron Guard members, into adherents of Marxist and Soviet ideals via the use of extreme violence and abuse that prisoners inflicted on each other.⁷ In December 1989, when Romanians rushed to the streets to protest Ceaușescu’s dictatorship, they took a stand not only against the dire economic situation but also against the very system that deprived them of basic rights and freedoms. This revolt, however, may have been only a stepping stone toward actual justice, the road to which Romania has not yet fully traversed. Post-communist Romania was left not only with the task of transitioning toward democracy, a process entailing numerous economic, judicial, and political challenges and reforms. It was also left with a nation struggling to reckon with its communist past and the human rights violations committed against generations of Romanians who lived behind the Iron Curtain. Many of these violations can be traced to the widespread surveillance enacted during communism, especially under the Ceaușescu regime, when most Romanians lived under fear. I call this phenomenon *dossierveillance* to emphasize the role of documentation in surveillance practices, and the use of the files for recruitment.

Dossierveillance announces the change from the overt terror of the Stalinist era when Dej was in power to the more tacit mental and emotional terror experienced under the Ceaușescu decades, a shift discussed in the works of both Lavinia Stan and Dennis Deletant (7; 1–106). But there is more than paperwork in the *dossierveillance* operation. The dossier in *dossierveillance* is an “assemblage” of data (Haggerty and Ericson), objects, and tools that change according to demand and availability of data. The omnipresence of this dossier in the lives of individuals was “capillary” and “rhizomatic” (Clegg; Zureik 42). It began on the desks of Securitate officers, in the shape of a file, for example, and could have ended in the kitchens, bedrooms, and workplaces of its targets, in the most intimate of corners of a person’s life, all with the help of the informers who made the dossier spread far and wide.

Thus, I embrace an inclusive understanding of the dossier in discussing *dossierveillance*. The word “dossier” also stands for the technology and apparatus that kept records of who did what in the process of victimizing people, and allowed for the Securitate to place people under its surveillance. Standing behind the dossier were the individuals who compiled documents, installed telephone wires to bug apartments, took photographs while following people, and so on. The dossier, metaphorically speaking, was thus the canvas on which the intentions and cunning plans of these individuals manifested. The dossier was therefore everything that the Securitate used to ensure the accomplishment of the Securitate’s goal: to know as much as possible about those it watched day and night.

Hence, the ghost-like presence of the dossier in the lives of Romanians under Ceaușescu’s regime is not the same as the actual dossier researchers’ encounter in

the CNSAS reading room—a dusty file, compiled and recompiled in ways that may not do justice to its initial structure, as intended by the officers who first created it. The emphasis on how documents are used, noted in this special issue, also directs attention to the materiality of written reports, which provided tangible proof that the Securitate was present in the lives of people.⁸ For the Securitate—a rather abstract yet immensely powerful entity—to be physically present in someone’s life, it required transforming ordinary human beings into members of its surveillance network who could have been someone’s lover, teacher, spouse, priest, or friend. The *dossierveillance* operation officiated this metamorphosis as witness and proof of transformation.

More than twenty-five years after the fall of communism, Romania still reckons with its painful communist past, which saw major human rights violations. Some members of post-communist governments and various civil society organizations, comprised of former victims of the communist regime, have attempted to publicly acknowledge and punish these violations by arguing for the adoption of a lustration law (Luca), which Romania has yet to implement as of 2019. Lustration, a type of “vetting” of representatives of former dictatorial regimes and their collaborators (Ciobanu, “Post-Communist” 122), includes the call for the “ban of former communist officials and spies from post-communist politics and positions of responsibility in the economic, academic, and cultural spheres” (Stan and Turcescu 200). In the post-communist Romanian context, a lustration law would target individuals who collaborated with Romania’s communist government. Such a law, however, would be rather difficult to implement, given the significant number of individuals who collaborated with the Securitate.

British historian Timothy Garton Ash described the end of the communist era in Eastern Europe as an “extraordinary mishmash, a profound fragmentation and cacophony of interests, attitudes, views, ideals, traditions: what in Polish is called a *miazga*” (52). This characterization could not be more descriptive of the post-communist reality in Romania, where efforts to address the communist regime’s repressions were met with strong opposition, especially from political groups with ties to the previous regime and ambitions for Romania’s political future. Despite the revolutionary attempts in 1989 to overthrow the country’s communist government, the political events that followed showed, as Carmen Gonzalez-Enriquez argues, the “resilience of the ruling elite” (218), which, according to Monica Ciobanu, “attempted to manufacture a narrative of the December 1989 revolution as a complete break with the past . . . consciously or unconsciously provid[ing] the basis for collective amnesia” (“Post-Communist” 126). Simultaneously, representatives of various nongovernmental organizations, survivors of the communist repression, and dissidents of the regime, argued for what Ciobanu refers to as the “unfinished revolution” (127), a phrase also employed by Steven D. Roper in the title of his book on Romanian communist and post-communist history. At the center of this debate lies the following question: was the revolution culminating with the trial and execution of the Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu sufficient

to put to rest and reconcile Romania's communist past?⁹ It is a simplistic question, to say the least, that ignores the complex and painful reality of generations of Romanians who lived through the terror of communism and whose suffering could not possibly have been erased or redressed by a regime change. With the release of Securitate documents to CNSAS in 2006, however, compromising information about former communist elites was first revealed to the public (Ciobanu, "Post-Communist" 130).

After 2008, CNSAS, which was established eight years prior, became primarily a repository of archives with mostly administrative duties (Stan 96; Brucan 88), though it maintained its right to reveal to the public findings concerning collaboration in the communist era (Horne). Furthermore, the cultural initiatives of CNSAS to shed light on the country's communist history,¹⁰ as well as its oversight of the general public's access to files, led to what Horne refers to as "silent" or "informal" lustration. Carried out in a political climate largely unfriendly to initiatives of this scope, this "informal" lustration resonates closely with what Michel de Certeau described as a "tactic" (37). Unlike official "strategies," which de Certeau implies are a "subject of will and power" (37)—and which in the case of Romania would have been initiated by its post-1989 political elite—these "tactics" originate primarily from civic organizations, former dissidents and political prisoners, CNSAS, as well as from Romanian citizens wishing to access their own Securitate files in search of answers about their pasts. Such "tactics" may have brought Romania a step closer to uncovering its own communist past.

In 2018, American anthropologist Katherine Verdery released an insightful book about her analysis of her own Securitate file, tellingly titled *My Life as a Spy*. Verdery's 2,781-page file, produced while she conducted ethnographic research in communist Romania starting in the 1970s, depicts her as a threat to the Romanian state. "Nothing compares with the reading of your own Securitate file. It makes you question who you are really," Verdery said in a recent interview provided in Romanian to Otilia Andrei: "Page by page, all your activities and motives are subject to a reading undertaken from a different point of view, chained into a logic different from everything you recognize."¹¹ Under the "logic of totalitarianism," as Juan Mendez argues, human actions "may have been morally reprehensible but not necessarily criminal when they were committed" (7). Often during the communist period, as Romanian writer Nicolae Steinhardt, formerly a political prisoner in Romania's communist prisons, points out, you were "not accused [by the communist regime] for what you have done, but for who you [were]" (qtd. in Vatulescu 183). Allegations, according to Verdery, often "evolved over time." In Verdery's case, for example, she was suspected of being a CIA agent while she conducted her research in Romania (*Secrets and Truth* 54).

This essay seeks to shed light on what some of the Romanians targeted for collaboration may have experienced under the Securitate's surveillance. *Psychographic* work was central to the exploration of a person's vulnerabilities. In defining this concept, I lean closer toward the Aristotelian understanding of the term

psuche, a term that, according to K. V. Wilkes, is “enjoying a revival” in academic scholarship (109). For Aristotle, the term *psuche* stands for that which makes one that which one is (Ackrill).¹² Others might translate *psuche* as the “self,” or, to use the words of F. J. A. Hort, “that which is at once most individual and most permanent in us” (qtd. in Jackson 5). *Psuche* is thus the “actuality” of a human being manifested to varying degrees through interaction with others (Everson 64–66). According to Aristotle, *psuche* involves all the capacities and powers granted to human beings: identity, feelings, sentiments, and the very force within humans that makes a person who they are (Everson; Wilkes). In this essay, I examine how the *psuche* of Securitate targets was examined in order to yield *psuchographic* profiles with the aim of recruitment. As such, biographic mediation helps explain how the Securitate gained new members of its spying networks.

Reading the Securitate Files: Informer Notes, Securitate Reports, and Manuals

The mere perusal of secret police files produced by totalitarian regimes is sufficient to instigate strong feelings even in the most detached researcher, a conclusion also supported in Cristina Vatulescu’s *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*, Kirsten Weld’s *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*, and Timothy Garton Ash’s *The File: A Personal History*. Take for example Weld’s moving narration of the story behind Guatemala’s National Police files. Studying these archives calls for what Weld identifies as special “archival thinking” to provide “a method of historical analysis” and “a frame for political analysis” (13). “Archival thinking” may be similar to meditation insofar as it demands letting go of what one knows to embrace the unknown as it unravels itself in front of one’s eyes, page by page. Perhaps secret police files produced by totalitarian regimes can show us the fragility of our existence, revealing how sociocultural, economic, and political conditions have a decisive impact on life choices and the paths we may feel obliged to take. Such may have been the case of the individuals these files mention—perpetrators, victims, and both—who, as a result, may have experienced internal torment that some of them may have even carried with them to their grave.

Reading the Securitate files does come with some challenges. The sheer volume of the Securitate files currently stored at CNSAS makes it humanly impossible to consult all of them. No one has ever read or will ever read all the Securitate files, for many were destroyed prior, during, or after the 1989 Revolution. Those that were not destroyed cannot possibly be read in their entirety because of the large volume currently stored at the CNSAS, in Bucharest and Popesti-Leordeni, Romania. The most significant challenge, however, in doing archival research is understanding and interpreting these files, for herein lies the perennial struggle of the researcher: to discern the voice of the officer from that of her target, of the powerful and of the weak, thereby digging for the truth hidden in these files, or getting as close as possible to it.

Doing archival research is a lot like a meditative journey into the unknown. The researcher collects bits of information that at first hand may not make much sense. In time, however, with the perusal of numerous files, what seemed at first like mere facts, signatures, fragments of text, and names become parts of a story. Like pieces of a puzzle, the pages in these files, often placed in a non-chronological order, begin gradually to produce a story that the researcher struggles to understand. Moreover, archival work is a bit like archaeology, in the sense of looking through old structures and relics of a past long gone. Unlike archaeologists, however, the researcher of these files knows full well that the system and civilization that produced these items could recur in the future. The researcher's duty is thus not only descriptive but also preventive. The purpose of this essay fits within these two categories.

Lastly, there are also ethical implications in reading and analyzing other people's files. Do I have the right to read these files? I often asked myself this during my first research trip to CNSAS. What would the victims say if they knew? Some of them have already passed away. Where is their agency in all this? How do I write in an objective manner while understanding that I write about these people's suffering? Or, to use the title of a collection edited by Martin Modlinger and Philipp Sonntag, I write about "other people's pain." Each of these files speaks directly or indirectly of pain to come, and perhaps even suggests future regrets or remorse for how the file distorts and documents life choices. Not all those who played a part in the production of these files may have ardently believed in everything those files stood for. Determining how to analyze them with the objectivity that scholarly research demands may be a perennial struggle for any researcher. I am no exception in this case.

In her analysis of Securitate archives, Cristina Vatulescu argues that "if we are going to get anywhere in the study of these archives, not least to the famous nuggets, we have to patiently (re)learn to read" (13). The task of "(re)learning," as Vatulescu puts it, involves tracing the history of these files to the very system that made them as powerful as they were. As I intend to show below, Securitate officers cunningly and predatorily sought to find out as much as they could about their targets. Whether Securitate officers *correctly* identified the crux of personal motives is another story, one that is not of key concern in my essay, which instead focuses on explaining the very attempt at getting close to one's target with the key goal of learning about, and successfully manipulating, vulnerabilities to serve the regime's needs. An attempt, needless to say, does not always translate into the successful delivery of one's aim. In the case of a human being, it is unlikely that someone can claim ultimate victory in this respect.

Once someone had been recruited, a Securitate officer provided the recruit with a few instructions on how to carry out the first assigned task, stressing once again the need for the recruited individual to keep the work secret ("Educară" 36). During the meeting, the officer instructed the new recruits how to write an informative note, assigned them conspiratorial names, and set up a time and location for

their next follow-up (“Educare” 37). In respect to the nicknames assigned to informers and other members of the surveillance network, such names were often provided at the bottom of their notes within quotation marks, with seemingly no specific rule dictating how these names were picked. The assigning of these conspiratorial names partook in what Coletu refers to as biographic mediation as well. The act of renaming someone was a tool that approximated a partial knowledge of the individual by the Securitate.

The gender of the informer, however, tended to be respected in terms of nicknames. Someone given the nickname “Maria” most likely was a woman, and someone called “Mihai,” a man. While some of these conspiratorial names, such as “Jean,” “Wilhelm,” “Buick,” “Adolf,” “Ludovic,” or “Coleman” are Western-sounding, a significant number of them represent more widely used Romanian first and last names, such as “Andrei,” “Petrescu,” or “Radu,” with a few of them even sounding rather endearing, representing the diminutive version of first names often used for children, such as “Costel” and “Mitică.”¹³ As in Spanish, French, and Russian, in Romanian the diminutive component of a word is added to the word’s root as a suffix. But among all the nicknames I have encountered in my archival research thus far, one of them—“Kiss,” written in English as indicated and not in its Romanian form (*sărut*)¹⁴—stands out for its sentimental connotation. Even in Securitate files, the longing for romance and human connection, or perhaps merely a sense of humor, was seemingly not dead. I must point out, however, that “Kiss” is also a common Hungarian last name. Thus, it is impossible to know which linguistic interpretation of this nickname the respective informer assumed. This example illustrates how difficult it is to interpret these files and discern the intentions of those mentioned in them. The example also demonstrates the difficulty of reading acts of biographic mediation when the mediating function of procedures and policies relating to the construction of the documents is inaccessible or lost.

Erving Goffman argues that there is a theatrical component to identity, which changes depending on whom and what one faces, deals, and interacts with. The nickname assigned to an informer to create an alternative *conspiratorial* identity for that person may have perhaps facilitated the assumption of a new persona the informer had to embrace while carrying out the assigned spying operation. For some collaborators, the new name may have even eased the inner conflict that arose from conducting such an operation, perhaps even helping them compartmentalize actions and assign culpability to the version of self carried out under that specific conspiratorial name in case of any remorse.

One of the key goals of the Securitate was to identify any potential threat in society. The Securitate sought to partake in the utopian plan of the regime to create what turned out to be impossible, the so-called “new man,” by combing through all strata of society in search of anyone who may have blocked the implementation of this much-awaited new world order. Securitate files, similar to Bolshevik files, refer to such unwanted individuals as “elements” (*elemente*) (Holquist, “Information”), people with sociocultural backgrounds, religions, or political beliefs that were

deemed unfit for the new world order the Securitate was assigned to help create. As the word itself suggests, there was nothing flattering about being called an “element.” In Securitate files, “elements” are described as “counter-revolutionary” (*contra-revoluționare*), or “constituted of contra-revolutionary groups” (*constituite în bande contrarevoluționare*), “hostile” (*ostile*), “spiteful” (*dușmănoase*), “racketeer” (*afacerist*), or “criminal” (*criminal*). Only in very few instances did I encounter a few seemingly complimentary descriptions of an “element,” portrayed as “honest” (*cinstit*), and in another instance as “intelligent” (*inteligent*) (“Proiect” 50, 59, 100, 102, 113, 127; “Cultul” 39, 60).

Who were these “elements” in the greater scheme of the Securitate’s operation? Although it is impossible to confirm whether Securitate agents believed everything they wrote in their reports and other official documents on their targets, informers, and collaborators, the documents they produced resonate with the mythic “hero’s journey” structure proposed by Joseph Campbell in *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, first published only a decade or so prior to the time when some of the files mentioned in this essay were produced. The hero, in this case, is the Securitate; the “elements” are the obstacles the hero has to face, while the members of the surveillance network serve as the helpers who come to the rescue on the hero’s journey toward the new world order that the Securitate was called to establish. Applying Campbell’s model also suggests that the life of the file represents the many-sided personality of the state via the number of writers contributing to this heroic pursuit of knowledge. This example helps illustrate an important aspect of biographic mediation—the fact that this type of undertaking relies on the input of various actors to function. The Securitate’s demand for personal disclosure and its quest for information on its potential recruits via compiling *psuchographic* profiles involved a plethora of actors, including Securitate officers, informers, and other members of the surveillance network, or “helpers” to use Campbell’s model, who were promoted or demoted within the network’s hierarchy based on the quality of the information they provided.

The informer notes tended to follow the format of who did what, why, and how, and the notes were signed by both the informer, using an assigned conspiratorial name, and the officer who received it (“Educare” 30).¹⁵ They were provided in written form or typed by a handler during the meeting. In some cases, the meetings were recorded on a tape recorder and later typewritten (“Educare” 27). When the note was delivered, the officer could ask for further details to ensure all information was collected and nothing was remiss. At times, such notes disclosed some of the most intimate details of the target’s life because the people who revealed such information to the secret police were the victims’ teachers, university professors, lovers, childhood sweethearts, spouses, or even best friends. Some informer notes and Securitate reports were based on the information provided by informers and collaborators about their targets’ love interests (*relații sentimentale*), their lives at home (*domiciliu*), or relations with their neighbors, with whom, as one report states, a woman “limits herself with only a hello” (*limitandu-se în relații cu ei numai la salut*)

(“Cultul” 4). Targets’ relationships with their neighbors are a rather frequent subject in Securitate files, along with their financial statuses and details about the houses or land they owned (“Cultul” 349, 366). In this biographic mediation enterprise, the Securitate spread its policing practices to its recruiters, who kept a close eye on their neighbors, colleagues, family members, and friends.

One note discloses the targeted person’s “expensive-looking clothes whose provenance I don’t know” (“Cultul” 22). Another one states that the wife of the person under surveillance “plays poker with . . . [other] women” (“Cultul” 225). Seemingly banal details helped lead to a perverse activity, the Securitate’s building of *psuchegraphic* profiles. Castel equates perversion with the exploitation of personal vulnerabilities. In Securitate documents, terms such as “compromising materials” (*material compromițătoare*) (“Proiect” 105), or a “hostile past” (*trecut dușmănos*) (“Proiect” 104–105), such as a former bourgeois life, for example, are employed interchangeably as “points” of leverage for “convincing” the target to collaborate. Information about affairs or illegitimate children (“Proiect” 109) fell within the same category of information collected.

In the cases described here, the *psuchegraphic* work is a type of perverse ethnography. Surveillance indeed shares some features with ethnographic activity,¹⁶ but while the Securitate did ethnographic work in the study of its targets, it was always done with the intent to harm and not just to understand. Fear, through *dossierveillance*, almost always had some effect on how Romanians under communism related to the secret police. The dossier was the fear-inducing byproduct of the biographic mediation the Securitate employed in acquiring recruits, via its *psuchegraphic* work on members of its surveillance network.

Part of what I refer to here as the dossier entailed the technology needed to make secret searches and secret entrances, carry out missions of disinformation (providing false information with the intent of misleading someone), or preparing and implementing what it referred to in the manuals as “operative games” (*jocuri operative*), the totality of tactics and methods of surveillance employed mostly in dealing with secret services abroad and terrorist organizations (“Instrucțiuni Privind Organizarea” 7). At times, the Securitate employed “procedures and methods made available by physics, chemistry, mathematics, electronics, cybernetics, criminal studies,” or it advised calling “on the support of specialists from these domains” in the course of its work, according to one of its manuals (“Caracterul” 39). This type of scientific technology was also part of the dossier.

The dossier in *dossierveillance* also comprised the tools necessary for the Securitate to secretly enter into someone’s apartment to see the external correspondence they received and to bug their phone (“Referitor” 36), to intercept radio signals (“Mapă” 339), and to monitor telephone communications between Romania and other countries, such as the US or Canada, listening to the conversations between Romanians and those living abroad (“Verificări” 132). Instances of *dossierveillance* in Securitate files are numerous, and include the confiscation of postcards and letters (“Problema” 48, 62, 96, 133, 433); the taking of photos and videos

(“Instrucțiuni privind munca” 15); the confiscation of a letter addressed to Ronald Reagan by an American couple requesting that their niece, a doctor in Romania, be granted permission to immigrate to the US (“Verificări” 96); the confiscation of a package sent from Switzerland that had food items and sweets (“Verificări” 35); the search of another package sent by a man from the Federal Republic of Germany to a Romanian that contained a thermometer, a photo, and a piece of paper (“Verificări” 5); the retention of a letter addressed to a Romanian scientist about his attempt to join the American Association for the Advancement of Science (“Verificări” 172–174); and the investigation of a Romanian’s connections to someone in Bloomington, Indiana through the confiscation of their correspondence (“Mapă” 105–108). The members of the surveillance network played a crucial role in spreading the dossier in the *dossierveillance* operation far and wide, in the most intimate places in a target’s life, such as the kitchen, the classroom, the confessional, and even the bedroom.

But not all informers and collaborators of the Securitate collaborated at all times, and not all resisters resisted at all times. That is, to use the words of Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu, “a person’s relationship with the Securitate could easily change from torturer to tortured, then back again” (*Religion and Politics* 66). One week one could have been a perpetrator, and then the next, a victim, and perhaps another day a resister, to a certain extent. In such cases, informers were abandoned, either for their inability to inform, or lack of “will to work” in this capacity.¹⁷ Others were let go for lack of information on a given target, or because they were transferred to a new location,¹⁸ with a few of them being fired for “lacking sincerity” (*nu era sincer*) in their work.¹⁹ Some informers failed to show up for their meetings with their handlers (“Proiect” 107). Others provided good information in their collaborative work, but only to a certain point, amounting to what I would call the phenomenon of resistance in collaboration, which cannot be understood in Manichaean terms.

Take, for example, the case of the informer I shall call Andrei to protect his identity, who, as one note states, was “studied, contacted and in the year 1977 recruited as an informer.” Although his performance as an informer is described as satisfactory, Andrei, a priest, “nevertheless has reservations” in his provision of information “when it comes to those whom he supports materially and morally,”²⁰ a report on him concludes. Although the hero’s journey scheme is helpful in understanding how the members of the surveillance network may fit within the greater scheme of the Securitate’s operations, one ought not to assume that things always worked smoothly for the Securitate when it came to its dealings with the members of its surveillance network. Or, one ought not to assume that all the hero’s helpers were indeed helpful at all costs and at all times, even when they obtained rewards that were not always financial (Stan 66). In exchange for collaboration, some were granted the opportunity to relocate from rural to urban locations or to travel abroad. Travel passports in communist Romania were a privilege granted only to those who had agreed to collaborate (Deletant). But even people who received

some meager benefits in exchange for collaboration may not have been spared agony over the course of their collaborative work. A great deal of this kind of tacit yet terrorizing violence was generated by the bureaucratic processes involved in the Securitate's accumulation of biographic data on its targets, some of whom, once spied on, became spies themselves.

In the case of Plamadeara's novel, for Anton Adam to begin to doubt and eventually stop believing that he is indeed Anton Adam, his confidence and his sense of self had to be tampered with somehow, even if the tampering meant modifying, at first, the more superficial aspects of what made him Anton Adam, such as his physical appearance. It is no surprise, then, that in their files Securitate officers often used the verb "a lucra" (to work), the adjectival form "lucrat" (worked),²¹ the expression "luat in lucru" (taken to be worked),²² or the noun "lucrare" (work)²³ in describing their efforts to study and recruit an individual. Work, in physical terms, necessitates the application of an external force that results in shift of position. To "work" on something or someone, as the Securitate employed this term, was bound to change the inner status quo, if only as a side effect. With the right tools of control and effective enough methods of terror, violence, coercion, intimidation, and manipulation tailored to target a person's soft spots, or what the Securitate referred to as "vulnerable points," many individuals worked (*lucrate*) by the Securitate eventually yielded to its demands and requests.

Furthermore, if worked by the Securitate, a person's own imagination may have caused additional distress by overestimating the power of the Securitate to inflict harm. The power of the Securitate, especially under the aegis of *dossierveillance*, was nurtured by the charade the Securitate managed to maintain for a while: the police may have only known x about a target, but the target may have thought it knew $10x$, with x standing for compromising material one hoped to keep secret. Under this assumption, targets were more afraid and docile than necessary, and the Securitate was more efficient than it could have been if the cards were revealed to all the players involved in this dangerous game. Under *dossierveillance*, doing *psuchegraphic* work on the Securitate's targets was thus a powerful and efficient method for the police to discern who was an "element," and at any given moment who would be an informer or collaborator, a victim or a perpetrator, or the tortured or the torturer, roles that at times also reversed.

The Romanian word for soul (*suflet*), which some theologians use to describe the *psuche*, was also employed in Securitate documents, such as the informative note (*notă informativă*) discussed next, which was written by an informer and handed to a Securitate officer on February 9, 1961. This neatly typewritten document contains what was at the time considered compromising material on a man deemed a threat to the Romanian Communist State and described as someone who "seriously hates our regime and State; firstly because he lost a good job that he had as a diplomat in the Middle East; and secondly because of his convictions and *the formation of his soul*" (emphasis mine) ("Cultul" 131).²⁴ Equally striking in this document is the analysis provided by the Securitate officer who had received this

information, offered in the commentary listed at the bottom of this document, under the section titled “the bureau’s note”:²⁵ “The bureau will verify all those who appear in the note and will study the one who is most equipped for recruitment.” In the following section, I discuss how this study was conducted, using as examples the stories of Ioan and Maria, as told in Securitate files. Both stories give us a glimpse into the way in which *psuchegraphic* work was carried out on these individuals in order to recruit them. Although meticulously done, the *psuchegraphic* work done on Ioan did not yield recruitment. His case, as discussed next, shows, nevertheless, the highly invasive nature of this type of study done on individuals in order to get to one’s vulnerable points.

The Securitate’s *Psuchegraphic* Work: The Cases of Ioan and Maria

In 1960, the story of Ioan, who was a Christian Orthodox priest, ends with his imprisonment, likely following the failure of the Securitate to recruit him to spy on his close friend Marcu. The documents in Ioan’s Securitate file follow three of the following four stages of the Securitate’s recruitment protocol provided in one of its instruction materials: the identification of potential candidates (*punctarea candidaților*), the study and background check of potential candidates, the selection of candidates, and the recruitment of selected candidates (“Instrucțiuni Privind Activitatea”). The recruitment protocol serves in this case as a crucial component of the Securitate’s biographic mediation aimed at recruiting. The protocol laid out in the respective instruction manual initiates the process of biographic mediation itself.

I refer to him as Ioan (Romanian for John) in order to protect his identity, borrowing the name from the author of the Gospel of John, a text that he most likely knew well. In the same spirit, I have assigned the names of Marcu (Romanian for Mark) and Matei (Romanian for Matthew) to the other men mentioned in Ioan’s files, with Matei being the principal target of the police.

With Ioan’s close ties to Marcu and Marcu’s close ties to Matei, the Securitate was preparing a circuitous route to accumulate central information on Matei. Matei was the key target, but to study him other individuals in his social circle had to be studied first. Ioan’s long-time friend Marcu showed an anti-communist attitude during the Second World War and had written and published prayers against the communist regime. Described in the same informer note as “dictatorial and heavy, nervous and even violent” in his leadership style (“Cultul” 45), Marcu was worked by the Securitate prior to 1959, when the name of Ioan, his former pupil (*ucenic*) and personal assistant, was highlighted in ink in one of Marcu’s files (“Cultul” 96, 46, 38). The highlighting of one’s name in ink, frequently in blue and sometimes in red, in such dossiers often foreshadowed their suffering. This is how many individuals were identified or, to use the Securitate’s language, “pinpointed”—from the Romanian noun *punctare*—to “attract [them] to collaboration,” according to one of the Securitate manuals (“Instrucțiuni Privind Activitatea” 10).

The term *punctarea candidaților* literally means scoring or spotting candidates.

In Romanian, *punctare*, meaning highlighting or marking, traces its etymological roots from the Latin word *punctum* or point. *Punctare*, in this context, comes close to the verb “pinpoint” in English. From a series of individuals pinpointed, the best are selected for recruitment according to the following aptitudes and traits: “personal qualities, possibilities to provide information and guarantee sincere collaboration” (“Instrucțiuni Privind Activitatea” 8). This process is an important example of biographic mediation, as it represents the first step in the process of managing “who gets what,” per the definition of this term, or, in this case, who becomes what—a collaborator or a resister. Pinpointing was how this process often began, in the case of the Securitate’s creation of its surveillance network.

The second stage in the recruitment process described in the manual embodies the production of *psuchegraphies* on potential candidates being considered for collaboration, most of whom may have been unaware of the fact that they were on the Securitate’s radar (“Educarea” 22–23). The phrase “being taken for study” (*luat în studiu*) in these files was a clear sign that the recruitment process on a target had entered the second stage. In Ioan’s case, we find this phrase in a document dating from February 12, 1960 (“Cultul” 35).

Being aware that one was being worked by the Securitate, as was the case for Ioan, may have been as harmful as the actual interaction with Securitate personnel one may have had under seemingly banal pretexts. A great deal of this slow violence resulted from what I would call the “first blow” dealt by the Securitate: a call to be interviewed (*audiat*) at the Securitate’s offices, as Ioan was (“Cultul” 11). It could have been felt by the mere suspicion of being followed by a stranger, or by the thought that a friend had turned into an informer. The impact of the blow might have been compounded by the inner conflict a targeted person felt in trying to act as if this revelation had never occurred. The internal torment that emerged from this first blow may have set in motion further internal torment for the target, without much further direct intervention from the Securitate. In such cases, only the victim could tell with full accuracy how agonizing and haunting this whole experience was, an experience in which the Securitate only had to make the first move to win the whole game. By “winning,” I do not mean solely by luring a human being into collaboration, but also by quelling any inner resistance, making the person a docile bystander, afraid to overtly denounce the regime. Such was perhaps the case for Ioan, whose history with the Securitate I tell here based on Securitate files on him issued between the years 1959 and 1960. The construction of Ioan’s story based on his own encounter with forms of biographic mediation by the Securitate produced yet another type of biographic mediation.

Ioan’s files suggest that the Securitate relied significantly on the informers assigned to collect compromising material on him with the goal of making him “dependent” (*dependent*) on the police, as the report for recruiting him states (“Cultul” 9). In the words of the Securitate officers who issued this report, the police sought to identify what “would allow us to constrain him and place him in dependence to our bureau in the process of recruitment” (“Cultul” 9).²⁶ In another

similar document, one officer articulated the same idea as follows: “I think that to make him determined to collaborate with our bureau, it will be necessary to use compromising material that would make him dependent on us” (“Cultul” 14).

The files on Ioan and on Marcu offer some biographical information, such as the place of their birth, names of parents, education, and places of former employment, as well as personal traits (“Cultul” 36–38, 7–10). One Securitate report describes Ioan as “arrogant” and “in bad relations with neighbors” (“Cultul” 17–18). In another informer note, he is characterized as “very prudent and in discussion with him, if the subject arises, praises the regime.” A single informer note describing Marcu includes phrases such as “his goal in life was to take care of himself and of his family,” while describing him as “very calculated and does not rush to take a decision.” In yet another document, Ioan is described as a “careerist” (*careerist*) who had always “pursued his personal goals” (“Cultul” 36–38), and his entrepreneurial skills are described in another report as those of someone who “seeks any means to accumulate material gain without much effort” (“Cultul” 18–19).

The purpose of the investigation of everyday life was to establish what precisely would make one collaborate, and then to use “the most fitted tactic in attaining this objective as well as the conspiratorial methods in the case when the actions undertaken fail” (“Educarea” 16). For things not to “fail,” the Securitate officers reoriented tactics to suit “aptitude” (*aptitudine*), “temperament” (*temperament*), and “character” (*caracter*), the three “major aspects of one’s personality” (“Educarea” 16). A person’s intelligence level, critical reasoning skills (*logică*), attention to detail, self-control, and good retention skills were also documented thoroughly (“Educarea” 17). Was the person in question able to act with enthusiasm and in a calm manner? These traits accounted for “temperament” (“Educarea” 17–18). But “character” was more useful for discerning the potential motives or reasons that would have compelled an individual to collaborate because the construction of character on paper provided insight into the “hierarchy of essential motives, tendencies and aspirations of a person, as well as the possibilities of this person to translate in actions the decisions undertaken in regards to them” (“Educarea” 18). A person’s character, the same Securitate manual states, represents “an ensemble of attitudes taken in regards to society and people” (“Educarea” 18). It constitutes a “fundamental element in deciding whether a candidate ought to be recruited or not” (“Educarea” 18). With enough information on a given target and on their incentive to collaborate, many individuals were “convinced,” to use the Securitate’s language, to collaborate. The process of “convincing” did not include physical violence toward the target, though it continued to loom as a possible threat for non-collaborative behavior. Securitate files on Ioan dating from 1960 suggest that their attempt at “convincing” him failed that year.

Described in the three-page proposal for recruitment as highly equipped to provide the most intimate details of Marcu’s past, Ioan appears ideal as a collaborator: “Being for twenty-four years all the time next to [Marcu] . . . [Ioan] knows all

the secrets and all the intimacies of [Marcu] . . . knows who visited him and visits him, knows with whom . . . [Marcu] has relations” (“Cultul” 35).²⁷ Yet the compromising material on Ioan was insufficient to coax him into service. The document goes on to suggest a circuitous approach, what Securitate referred to as *atragerea treptată* (gradual attraction) (“Cultul” 7–10).²⁸ The Securitate sought to use information about Ioan’s cantankerous attitude toward his neighbors (“Cultul” 18–19) as a pretext to invite him to their offices and require that he provide reports on his neighbors with whom he was in alleged conflict (“Cultul” 11–14). However, judging from the document confirming shortly after that Ioan was sentenced to serve a five-year term in jail for engaging in homosexual relations (“Cultul” 15), or what another document describes as “inversion” (*inversiune*) (“Cultul” 16), Ioan’s response likely suggested that he would not acquiesce to the Securitate’s demands. His story in the dossier ends abruptly with his incarceration, an injustice inflicted on him likely due to his refusal to betray a friend.

A few points must be made here about Ioan and the *psuchegraphic* work done on him and other individuals like him. First, I must stress that the files granted to me make it impossible to confirm Ioan’s word-for-word response to the Securitate’s proposal, as I found no corresponding document in the dossier. Perhaps this report was never issued, or, if it was issued, I have not yet found it as of the time of the writing of this essay. Second, it cannot be assumed that everyone experienced the same type and degree of punishment as Ioan did for resisting. Ioan’s case occurred in the Stalinist Dej era, but if he had been approached by the Securitate with the same offer in later decades, he might have been treated in a different manner. Third, there seems to have been an inverse relationship between the level of violence endured in the recruitment process through *psuchegraphic* work and the person’s interest in collaborating due to the benefits offered in return, such as travel passports (Deletant). Unlike the ardent anti-communist resisters who had served years in jail for their anti-Marxist and anti-Soviet activity and rhetoric, those who were motivated by financial and economic gains (Albu), or what Stan refers to as “misplaced patriotism” (64), may have needed little to no *psuchegraphic* work to convince them to collaborate. Fourth, the motives for collaboration evolved over time. What may have motivated someone at the beginning may have not served as a source of motivation throughout that person’s collaborative work (Plamadeala, “Dossierveillance”). This shift in motivations may have occurred in the case of someone I call Maria, the key character in a Securitate file issued in 1988,²⁹ the last year of Ceaușescu’s reign. In this file, Maria’s name was deliberately effaced by the CNSAS personnel in order to protect her identity.

The file mentioning Maria reads like a report on the establishment of a conspiratorial house (*casă de gazdă* or *casă de intâlniri*)³⁰ in a publishing firm. From this file, it is uncertain when Maria first joined the surveillance network and how her recruitment took place. Maria’s motives for collaboration can be seen as “misplaced patriotism” (Stan), and thus she may have been subjected to minimal *psuchegraphic* work. Described as “serious, well prepared professionally and politically,”³¹ Maria

had agreed to serve as the liaison between the Securitate's appointed informers,³² who were to infiltrate this *casă de gazdă* as the publisher's "outside collaborators," stopping by "for various work-related issues."³³ These informers were assigned to spy on Maria's colleagues and to report any "eventual inadequate comments":³⁴ that is, potential public displays of dissatisfaction with life under communism. Did Maria believe in Marxist and Soviet ideals in 1988, living in a defunct regime that was on the verge of collapse? It is difficult to answer this question. By 1988, the prosperity and equality that communism promised had failed to deliver a decent standard of living to most Romanians. Perhaps Maria was motivated to serve as an informer for reasons other than those in the report. The untold story could have included the fear of losing her job, the desire for a promotion, or even blackmail.

As in the case of resisters, the roles of informers with the Securitate were not static. This reality speaks more to the enigmatic capacity of a human being to fight back, to come to terms with reality, and to perpetuate this Sisyphean cycle of life. Through the Securitate's *psuchographic* work on targets in its long assembly line of file production, the Romanian secret police assigned three key roles in its charade: collaborators, resisters, and bystanders. Its *psuchographic* work helped the Securitate decipher who would be a victim and who would be a perpetrator in any given moment, who would be sent to a psychiatric ward despite being sound of mind, who would get to travel abroad, who would be imprisoned unjustly, as in Ioan's case, and who would get a much hoped-for promotion, as may have been the case for Maria and other members of the surveillance network.

Conclusion

This essay sheds light on the mechanisms and actors employed to recruit Securitate targets, processes that sought to lure targets into collaboration by exploiting their vulnerabilities, and, as suggested by Plamadeala's novel, by tampering with their authentic sense of self. A great deal of the Securitate's tacit yet terrorizing violence was generated by the bureaucratic processes and the biographic mediation of surveillance and recruitment. Once spied on, some targets became spies themselves. The Securitate file played an important part in constructing techniques for biographic mediation across institutions that engaged Securitate personnel while deciding the fate of those living ordinary lives. Subjected to the right tools of control and effective methods of coercion and manipulation tailored to address personal weaknesses, some individuals succumbed to the Securitate's demands. As a result of its *psuchographic* work, the Securitate produced many members of its surveillance network, bystanders, and a few resisters as well.

Notes

1. All translations provided in this article are the author's.
2. The oldest known texts in which the word *psuche* [ψυχή] first appears are close to

3,000 years old and belong to Homer, the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Homer's interpretation of this word, as used in his writings, comes close to "that which gives life." In time, the meaning of this word, which is derived from the Greek verb "to breathe," went beyond the Homeric interpretation. Later works employing this term, namely those of Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Philo, and even texts on papyri, Greek translations of the Old and New Testaments, did not limit this notion solely to a force that makes one come alive. For a detailed history of this concept, see Jackson.

3. For more information on the Soviet influence on the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, see, for example, Kligman and Verdery, especially chapter 1, "The Soviet Imprint"; Deletant, chapters 1–2; and Cristina Plamadeala.
4. In his policies, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej adhered closely to Stalinist ideals (Stan and Turcescu 46; Kligman and Verdery 104). For a detailed biography of Dej, see Balet.
5. This argument is also supported by Dennis Deletant. See Deletant, chapters 1–3, pp. 1–106.
6. On the human rights abuses in Romania's communist prisons, see, for example, the memoirs of Galina Raduleanu and Mircea Stanescu. On the persecution of the Yoga and Transcendental Meditation movement in Romania in the 1980s, see, for example, Andreescu.
7. This experiment took place in several prisons in Romania in the late 1940s and early 1950s. However, it tends to be associated with the Pitești prison, where this operation was carried out in an especially gruesome manner. The goal of this operation was to fundamentally change the personalities and beliefs of the prisoners participating in this experiment. The new personality would replicate the behavior of the prison abusers (Ciobanu, "Pitești" 623; Deletant 29–40; Petrescu and Petrescu 65).
8. I thank Lavinia Stan for her insightful comments in respect to this concept.
9. For a detailed account on the trial and execution of the Ceaușescus, see Stan, pp. 41–46.
10. CNSAS's efforts to increase awareness of the abuses and crimes of Romania's communist regime include the organization of annual national conferences and exhibitions on Romania's communist era, its Oral History Centre, established in 2010, and its digitization of files pertaining to Romania's communist gulags (Horne).
11. Translation from Romanian into English by the author.
12. Here the ancient Greek philosopher is referring to both inanimate objects and animate beings, famously claiming in his *De Anima* that an axe's *psuche* is that which makes the axe fulfill its chopping ability.
13. Archive of the National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives (ACNSAS), Fond documentar, D 69/43, pp. 1, 2, 3, 8, 24. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 69/43, p. 8.
14. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 69/84, p. 51; ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 69/43, p. 3.
15. On the left side of the note, the date and the name of the conspiratorial house or the place where the note was taken were recorded. On the bottom of the note, the officer offered a summary of the key ideas of the note, conclusions, next steps assigned, and

other observations.

16. See, for example, Green and Zurawski.
17. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 69/43, pp. 5–7.
18. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 69/43, pp. 5–7.
19. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 69/43, pp. 5–7. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 69/84.
20. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D69/84, p. 146.
21. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D69/84, pp. 128, 44, 35, 30–31, 7.
22. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 68/84, p. 2.
23. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D 69/84, pp. 184, 45.
24. In Romanian: “prin însăși convingerile și formația sa sufletească.”
25. In informer notes, the name of the meeting house tends to be provided along with name of the Securitate officer who received the note, the nickname of the informer, often referred to interchangeably as the source (*sursa*), and the date and location where the note was received. Such documents, as in this case, also contain some analysis and/or comments of the Securitate handler as well as information on the next task(s) assigned to the informer or collaborator.
26. In Romanian: “material pe baza cărora s-l putem constrînge și pune dependent față de organele noastre în procesul recrutării.”
27. In Romanian: “Fiind de 24 ani tot timpul pe lingă . . . [Ioan] cunoaște toate secretele și toate intimitățile lui . . . [Marcu], știe cine l-a vizitat sau îl vizitează, știe cu cine are legături . . . [Marcu].”
28. The proposal is structured in the following three sections: the scope of recruitment (*scopul recrutării*); “information about the candidate” (*date despre candidat*); and “usefulness and guarantee that the candidate corresponds to the proposed scope” (*utilitatea și garanția că candidatul corespunde scopului propus*).
29. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D000118, vol. 42.
30. A meeting house was a house, office, or other space made available to the Securitate via a written contract with the owner, landlord, or renter of the facility. It was used to arrange meetings between the Securitate officers and informers and residents belonging to the surveillance network. Those who agreed to this kind of arrangement were called “hosts of the meeting houses” (*gazde de case de întâlniri*) (“Index” 2).
31. ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D000118, vol. 42.
32. In this file, these informers are nicknamed “Aura,” “Nutu,” “Dora,” “Anna,” “Barbu,” “Brazu,” and “Coru.” ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D000118, vol. 42, p. 4.
33. In this context, the word “collaborator” is synonymous with being a “professional colleague.” ACNSAS, Fond documentar, D000118, vol. 42, p. 3.
34. I deduced this information from the “instruction note” written by a Securitate officer about another informer, given the task to spy on those working in this publishing house only a year prior. These informers were asked to provide reports on the individuals who may have had personal “complaints,” most likely in respect to the way the publishing house was run, all for the purpose of preventing “inadequate manifestations.” ACNSAS, Fond Informativ, D000118, vol. 42, p. 12.

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2003, pp. 31–56.

Cristina Plamadeala holds a doctorate in Humanities from Concordia University and in Philosophy from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Philosophy (cotutelle). Her most recent publications discuss the concepts of *dossierveillance* and *psuchegraphy* that she had coined and developed during her doctoral studies, words that seek to bring to light the depth of human suffering under totalitarian regimes. A graduate of Georgetown and Harvard Universities, where she pursued a BS in Foreign Service and an MA in Regional Studies in Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Cristina holds also an MA in Theological Studies from Concordia University. She currently resides in Paris, France.