

“ORWELLIAN...POSITIVELY ORWELLIAN:”
PROSECUTOR VOINEA’S CAMPAIGN TO SANITIZE
THE ROMANIAN REVOLUTION OF DECEMBER 1989

by Richard Andrew Hall

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I hold a B.A. from the University of Virginia (1984-1988) and a Ph.D. from Indiana University (1990-1997). I have been employed by the CIA since September 2000. I researched and wrote extensively on this topic prior to joining the Agency. Outside of the application process, I had no association with the CIA prior to coming on duty in September 2000. From October 2000 to April 2001, I served as a Romanian Political Analyst. Since October 2001, I have served as an intelligence analyst on accounts essentially unrelated to Romania or central and eastern Europe.

*Informational Note: In December 1989 forty-two years of communist rule came to an end with the overthrow of the regime of the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. The official death toll for the period of the Romanian Revolution, from 17 December 1989 – 10 January 1990 is 1,104 with 3,352 wounded. Of those, 942 people died (almost 90% of the total) and 2,251 were wounded, **after** Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, fled power at approximately noon on 22 December 1989. Although the quotations below are taken from print and electronic publications, and electronic bulletin boards, what follows is in many ways, an “oral history” of participants in the December 1989 events.*

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It Turns Out...the “Terrorists” Were Just a Hallucination

This just in...Breaking News from Romania...

Dateline Bucharest: General Dan Voinea, Chief Military Prosecutor, “has committed himself to uncovering the truth of the ‘terrorists’ who...killed so many [942] in December [1989].”¹ Voinea spoke of investigating the “terrorist diversion” and “suggested that the former president [Ion Iliescu] might have engaged in arranging the ‘terrorist affair’.”²

Wait a minute! Sorry, that was December 1997. Let’s try this again.

This just in...Breaking News from Romania...

Dateline Bucharest: In a stunning development, General Dan Voinea has declared: “There are no terrorists in the December ’89 files.”³

Nope. That was December 1998. Here, let’s give it another shot.

This just in...Breaking News from Romania...

Dateline Bucharest: “In a single blow, the Chief Military Prosecutor shoots down the entire invention of Iliescu: ‘There were no terrorists!’ General Dan Voinea declares that in December ’89 it was all a diversion.”⁴

A foreign journalist summarizes the quest of the heroic Voinea as follows: “General Dan Voinea is Romania’s chief military prosecutor and has embarked on a one-man mission to uncover the truth about what exactly happened during those days. When shooting mysteriously re-erupted on the night of December 22 and continued unabated until December 25, Iliescu and his generals blamed it on dark ‘terrorist forces.’ But Voinea and others believe the whole episode was a scenario crafted by the military. ‘The same people who had shot before now took power...The Superior Military Council, with its headquarters at the Ministry of

Defense, gave orders to the Central Military Command inside the Central Committee building and this Central Military Command directed military operations across the country, or more exactly, where there were masses of demonstrators.’”⁵ According to the journalist, Voinea is “on a lonely struggle to bring to justice those responsible for the unexplained deaths in the 1989 revolution.”⁶

A reporter for the daily “Ziua” states that a poll, conducted by the CURS public opinion polling firm at the request of the Open Society Foundation, reveals that “only 11% of Romanians still buy the tale of the terrorists.”⁷

A leading Romanian editorialist declares: “No one has the right any longer to question that this is the case [i.e., that the “terrorists” were a diversion by those who seized power], especially now that General Dan Voinea, Chief Military Prosecutor, the judge who had access to absolutely all existing documents and information, has officially declared that there were no terrorists. That it was all just a concoction.”⁸

Sorry. That was November and December 1999. My mistake. You are catching on: this is Romania’s version of “Groundhog Day,” whereby Voinea steps forward seemingly almost every December, makes the same claims, and his statements are triumphantly reported in the Romanian media as some kind of bombshell that no one has ever heard before. At this rate this could take a while...so let’s fast-forward to this past December: December 2005.

Broken News.

Dateline: Bucharest. “A ray of hope still exists for finding out the truth [about December 1989]. The lead investigator of the Revolution Dossier, Dan Voinea, declared yesterday that the diversion with the terrorists was used in order to change the goals of the revolution begun in Timisoara. ‘After 22 December 1989, the communists shot in order to stay in power. And they remained!’” affirmed General Voinea...All of the events of December 1989 in Romania were directed from the center, from Bucharest, specified General Voinea, who Monday declared that on 22 December 1989, in accordance with a diversion, people were duped into believing in the existence of terrorists. After 22 December 1989, the Romanian Revolution transformed, through a diversion ‘on television,’ from a fight against communism into one against a non-existent enemy—the terrorists.”⁹

The reactions by some of Romania’s prominent intellectuals have been extraordinary. Nicolae Prelipceanu writes, “What Dan Voinea says after investigating the terrorist files has been said by many people since 1990. True, these [people] had little in the way of data or testimonies to support them. Instead, knowing the people and the mentalities of those who were at the front of this so-called revolution, which confiscated the real one, they drew conclusions that today are being validated, after more substantial research. Now the

conclusion of the prosecutor, according to which there did not exist any type of terrorists, but rather incitement to violence by those from the front of the new power, can no longer be denied.”¹⁰

According to Stelian Tanase, in an article entitled simply “The Diversion”: “For 15 years the terrorist scenario has been floated by different politicians courting electoral support. No one made even a step toward finding out the truth. An event with hundreds of thousands of participants and eyewitnesses remained, paradoxically, a mystery. Were the investigators and prosecutors so incapable that they could not reconstitute the events and identify the guilty? I believe rather that they lacked the will to do it. I believe that the beneficiaries of this situation were those sufficiently powerful to block the investigations for 15 years. And do I need to remind anyone that after Dan Voinea’s revelations, Ion Iliescu brought grave accusations against the prosecutor?”¹¹

Liviu Cangeopol invoked the comparison with the Kennedy assassination in the U.S.: “As a result of the investigations of prosecutor Dan Voinea and the investigative accounts of some journalists and historians, Romanians appear to be luckier than their counterparts across the Ocean, who 42 years later still don’t know who left them without a president. For us, out of the thicket of Decembrist adventures, one thing has become certain: there weren’t any terrorists!”¹²

The ultimate expression of satisfaction and gratitude may have come from respected historian Stejarel Olaru. In “A Letter to Dan Voinea (the opinion of a historian),” he wrote: “Sir, Mr. Prosecutor, you know all these things [referring to events in Timisoara in December 1989]. I write to you now, 16 years after the bloody revolution and a year after the orange revolution [a reference in this case to the fall 2004 Romanian elections], I don’t know how to call it otherwise, tired of so many insincere commemorations. My theory, Mr. Prosecutor Voinea, is simple enough...If in Timisoara the order to fire at the population was given by “The Comrade [i.e. Ceausescu],” after 22 December, other ‘comrades’ tricked us as if we were a bunch of kids—and we were then!—, inventing a theory that would immediately be accepted: the terrorists are coming!...Mr. Prosecutor Voinea, I can only hope that you will have at your disposal sufficient computers, printers, food, cars and gas vouchers so that on 17 December 2006 I can enjoy for the rest of my long life that I could see two defendants in the box and not just one: Nicolae Ceausescu and Ion Iliescu.”¹³

Judging Voinea's Credibility

Why do I question Voinea's credibility on the "terrorist" question—despite the chorus of adulation, gratitude, and acceptance outlined above? Before moving on directly to the issue of the "terrorists," let us look at two potentially-related—in fact, I argue, related—matters as test cases of Voinea's credibility in his recent comments on the Revolution. Although not necessarily central to the story of December 1989, allegations regarding the existence, use, and discovery of gunfire simulators, and the institutional affiliation of so-called "lunetisti" (sharpshooters/snipers), are part of that story. These should not be difficult questions for Voinea, but instead he dismisses them with an unexpected salvo of "definitive" answers, designed to leave little room for further questioning from the interviewer. As I shall demonstrate, however, it leaves an ocean of doubt.

Test Case I: Automatic Gunfire Simulators

*Romulus Cristea (reporter "Romania Libera," interview 22 December 2005):
"Were any automatic gunfire devices or simulators found?"*

Dan Voinea: "No! We don't have a single confirmation of any such gunfire simulator! Until now we have not come into possession of any such device. No one saw such a gunfire simulator. A device was presented on TV as a simulator, but [it] was nothing of the sort. It was a lie! Before 1989, any device would have been in the inventory of a[n state] institution. No organization of ours, from the army to the Interior Ministry to the information services had such an apparatus in its stockpile. Not only did they not exist in the stockpiles, none were found, and we do not have any evidence that such apparatuses were brought into the country...."¹⁴

Doesn't leave a lot of room for misinterpretation or doubt, huh? Let us observe three key elements in Voinea's response. He denies not only that 1) no Romanian institution had such device, but that 2) no such devices were used in December 1989, and 3) no such devices were found in December 1989. This offers us three potential points of access to refuting his argument.

To begin with, there are the comments of senior communist official, CPEx (Romania's version of the Politburo) member Silviu Curticeanu, who was in the Central Committee building [the center of Nicolae Ceausescu's power] during these fateful December days. Asked by the daily *Jurnalul National* about Ceausescu's reaction to the disruption of his ill-conceived outdoor mass rally on 21 December 1989, Curticeanu responded:

*"There was no public reaction. He called together everyone responsible for the organization and smooth functioning of the meeting. **Those from the Securitate came and brought these nightsticks of which I spoke earlier, [as well as] simulators. They had some electronic apparatuses.** Everyone said the meeting was a provocation and everyone concluded the meeting was a provocation. After*

that [Ceausescu] left, as I said earlier, and then he held the teleconference [with party officials throughout the country] and that was it.”¹⁵

So, according to Curticeanu, there were simulators: they were brought to the CC building, and they were brought by the Securitate.

But wait, you say, Curticeanu was a party official, how would he know if these were simulators? A fair question. Well, then, let us look at the response of Securitate Director General Iulian Vlad before the Gabrielescu commission investigating the December events during the early 1990s:

“Mr. Gabrielescu: Did you hear about these simulators that were used?”

“Mr. Vlad: Of course, all of the Securitate had them...It seems to me that just such an electronic apparatus was used also on 21 December when the meeting broke up. After Nica Leon (shouted ‘Timisoara, Timisoara!’) automatic gunfire was heard and panic broke out...”¹⁶

So, according to no less than the head of the Securitate himself, the Securitate had such simulators and such a device was used on 21 December (—significantly he leaves the context ambiguous, suggesting indeed that they could have been used to break up the rally after it had turned against Ceausescu).

But neither of these sources, even if somewhat unintentionally divulging details that undermine their claims about December 1989, has a great deal of credibility. How about someone else—particularly someone with greater credibility among those who accept Voinea’s arguments—and how about a discussion of the simulators after 22 December? Understood.

Dumitru Mazilu, a key player in the December events who had by the time of the following comments become a fierce critic of Ion Iliescu and his cohorts, declared in 1991:

Reporter: What do you know about these controversial simulators?

Mazilu: In several places simulators were found. These imitated perfectly the rat-a-tat-tat of machine guns, making an infernal racket, which provoked a lot of panic in the population and confused the young revolutionaries and soldiers.¹⁷

Yes, but what about eyewitness accounts, by average citizens? Andrei Ionescu, who claims to have demonstrated on 21 December in University Square and to have participated in the events of the next several days in and around the Central Committee [i.e., CC] building, stated in 1992: “They didn’t break a single window [firing] in the CC. There were simulators because a bunch of us verified this in the ‘Romarta’ bloc, on the second floor.”¹⁸

Those inclined to give Prosecutor Voinea the benefit of the doubt also happen to be people who otherwise listen to what poet Mircea Dinescu has to say—with the convenient exception of the Revolution:

Interviewer: But the terrorists existed?

*Mircea Dinescu: Yes, they existed! They exist! [the interview transpires in 1997] I also saw the **electronic simulators**, Bucharest was full of them, there were long-existing plans, for the eventuality of invasions, attacks, etc.¹⁹*

Nor were simulators found in only in Bucharest. Recent articles on the Internet show people discovering them in Arad (Gai), Brasov, Sibiu, and Satu Mare.²⁰ These findings are significant because they show pattern, and, likely, planning and pre-positioning, across distant reaches of the country—just as Dinescu surmises.

Yet, remember: Prosecutor Voinea wants us to believe that the gunfire simulators did not exist and were not used in December 1989.

Test Case II: The Lunetisti

Romulus Cristea: “If the terrorists didn’t exist, what can you tell us about the sharpshooters [lunetisti]?”

*Dan Voinea: “The sharpshooters existed, all those who were equipped with weapons with scopes and were dispatched in battle at the time. There was shooting with weapons with scopes. **The sharpshooters were from the army.** [emphasis added]”²¹*

That the Army had sharpshooters with gun scopes is not in question. But Voinea’s certainty that those who shot with them in December 1989 were from the Army is jarring. In fact, it was the Securitate who we know had sharpshooters dispatched during these days. How do we know it? Well, here is Alexandru Cristescu, former chief of special operations for the Securitate’s “Special Unit for Anti-terrorist Warfare” (USLA), in front of the (Gabrielescu) Senate Commission investigating the December events in the early 1990s:

“On the night of 20-21 December, the decision was made to hold the meeting [i.e. Ceausescu’s ill-fated outdoor address]. At 5 AM I was called to organize measures for the meeting. I had 5 reserve [groups] of about 20 cadres, in 5 places, and 5 observation posts in the buildings surrounding the square with the CC building. The officers had pistols, while the observation posts had guns with scopes [“pusca cu luneta,” PSL, i.e. what lunetisti use], with five cartridges each, and binoculars.”²²

Andreea Tudor and Vasile Surcel more recently wrote of having come into possession of the “notes” of an “information service” that suggest that the Bucharest Municipal Securitate’s “Service 8 Guards” were deployed on 21 December 1989 in central Bucharest, some near University Square [where demonstrators were later massacred]:

“‘observer-sharpshooters’ were placed on the ‘Generala’ bloc, the tower of the bloc on Boteanu Street number 3. In the ‘Generala’ bloc there even existed a ‘safe house’ apartment in which ‘sharpshooters’ were usually ‘located.’ The same ‘Note’ shows that, on 21 December 1989, Lt. Dumitru Safta was placed in this bloc, on the fourth floor, in apartment 23, that officially belongs to the Piciu family. The officer had on his person a Makarov [9 mm] pistol with 12 cartridges, a machine gun with 120 cartridges, a sharpshooter rifle, binoculars, and a walkie-talkie.”²³

Razvan Belciuganu observes of a document from the Army’s Chief of the General Staff listing the weapons found on 109 suspected “terrorists” during the events: “What is interesting is the fact that on many of these [people] were found hunting rifles to which had been attached scopes [“lunete”], and even sophisticated night-vision devices.”²⁴

Finally, there are the recollections of eyewitnesses, a decade and a half later, who—despite the onslaught of cynicism toward such ideas—continue to maintain they saw what they thought they saw...

“I was an eyewitness to the capture of a terrorist (based on the color of his tan I’d swear he was Arab) who was using a PSL [i.e. sharpshooting rifle, a lunetist] and firing into the population...he was taken alive and beaten in front of my own eyes by the Army, then taken up into a truck, also by the Army...in the following days they continued to sustain over and over on radio and TV that there did NOT exist any terrorists, or at least that none had been captured...Yeah, I’m sure this guy bought his PSL at the ‘Universal’ department store.”²⁵

and...

“On the 24th I think, I was an eyewitness when soldiers captured an Arab sharpshooter (brown[-skinned] and he spoke broken Romanian)—who was using the famous “Pusca Semiautomata cu Luneta” (PSL—apparently Romanian) modified from an AK47. I’m sure that he had used it, and not just to help on his travels. They whisked him away in a truck and they brought him to the command [post] of a large town (Brasov). Later it was said that foreign forces were NOT implicated, or if they were, that there were no traces to prove it. For me, that was the moment in which I began to believe that I was having a lie forced down my throat.”²⁶

But Prosecutor Voinea can tell us—point blank—that those sharpshooters who fired in December were only from the Army!

What kind of people do not agree with Prosecutor Voinea's type of conclusions regarding the "lunetisti" and the alleged non-existence of "terrorists"? People like Andrei Firica, head of Floreasca Emergency Hospital in December 1989. In 2004, he recalled of those who were shot after 22 December:

"...The conduct of a terrorist is to kill innocent people, to create panic. When combatants are at war with one another, these can't be considered terrorists. But what else can you call someone who shoots [someone] right between the eyes, as happened to a woman on the 8th floor of a bloc on Balcescu Boulevard, in the area of the Unic department store... That person who fired was a 'lunetist' and for good reason was considered a terrorist. Or what happened to a colleague of ours, a secretary at the Medical Sciences Academy, who was sitting in his home when he was hit in the middle of his head by a bullet. These lunetisti, these sharpshooters, for good reason we call them terrorists.... From a [medical] diagnostic standpoint, those who say that there were no terrorists are telling a boldfaced lie (porcarie). In the Emergency hospital there were brought people who were shot with precision in the front, demonstrators hit by gunfire, from the back, from several meters away from the line of demonstrators, only terrorists could have done such things..."²⁷

Firica claims that he "made a small file of the medical situations of the 15-20 suspected terrorists from [i.e. interned at] the Emergency Hospital," but as he adds "of course, all these files disappeared." Firica reports that a Militia colonel, who he later saw on TV in stripes as a defendant in the Timisoara trial, came to the hospital and advised him "not to bring reporters to the beds of the terrorists, because these were just terrorist suspects and I didn't want to wake up one day on trial for having defamed someone" (!) The colonel later came and loaded the wounded terrorist suspects into a bus and off they went.²⁸

Voinea stands 0-for-2 then... and these were seemingly the easy questions.

Let us move on then from these two test cases, directly now to the question of the "terrorists" alleged non-existence.

A Fistful of Bullets: Unregistered, Atypical Munitions...

"Five, Five Something..."

Perhaps more directly pertinent to the issue of the "terrorists," and the question on which Voinea lays a big goose-egg, is the following. What does Voinea have to say about allegations that there was "special ammunition used, bullets with a vidia tip or dum-dum bullets"?

Romulus Cristea: "Did special ammunition, bullets with a vidia tip or dum-dum bullets, claim [any] victims? The press of the time was filled with such claims..."

*Dan Voinea: There were no victims (people who were shot) from either vidia bullets or dum-dum bullets. During the entire period of the events war munitions were used, normal munitions that were found at the time in the arsenal of the Interior Ministry and the Defense Ministry. The confusion and false information were the product of the fact that different caliber weapons were used, and therefore, the resulting sound was perceived differently.*²⁹

Prosecutor Voinea is perhaps less definitive, less clear here than in denying the existence of gunfire simulators and insisting that the *lunetisti* were unquestionably from the Army. By “normal munitions” I understand him to mean what was *officially* in the *registered* stockpiles of the Romanian armed forces: mostly 7,62 mm caliber weapons, but also apparently 12,7 and 14,5 mm caliber vehicle-mounted guns, and perhaps including 9 mm weapons belonging to the Securitate (more on this below). That is, of course, the rub of the Revolution, for nowhere in the *official registered* arsenals do bullets of a 5 (five) something caliber appear...and yet they showed up all over the place in December 1989.

Brasov: 14 June 1990 was an unusual and important day in Romanian history, but not solely for the event you probably have in mind if you follow Romanian affairs. Yes, in Bucharest, miners from the Jiu Valley were brutally hunting down anti-regime demonstrators and pretty much anyone else they suspected of sympathizing with opposition to President Ion Iliescu, but that was not the only significant event of that day. General Nicolae Spiroiu, future Defense Minister (1991-1994), appears to have been in the city of Brasov, assisting at the exhumation of people killed there during the December 1989 Revolution.³⁰ Such a step was a rarity, and apparently followed earlier talks between Spiroiu, five other officers, and the staff of the local newspaper *Opinia*, who were seeking clarification over who was responsible for the deaths of their fellow citizens. “They found in particular bullets of a 5.6 mm caliber that are not in the Army’s arsenal,” wrote the journalist Romulus Nicolae of the investigation.³¹ It is worth noting that eyewitnesses recount that on 23 December 1989, an individual in a black jumpsuit (“combinezon negru,” this is a recurring theme as we shall see) firing a Thompson automatic of 5.65 caliber (with many cartridges on him) was shot, injured, and arrested as a “terrorist.”³²

Braila: In Braila (where 42 people died and 95 were wounded), Army Lt. Major Ionut Voicu told the military prosecutor in charge of the case at the time of what he found while on a mission in the Stejarul forest on the night of 23-24 December 1989:

*Again I heard the sound of bullets. They had a specific whistle, I figured they were of a reduced caliber (the next morning this hunch was confirmed when I found bullets of a 5.6 caliber). There wasn't any flash from the mouth of their gun-barrels. Thus, they [must have] had a silencer over it.*³³

Sibiu: Army Lieutenant Colonel Aurel Dragomir claims that in the building across from the Vila Branga in Sibiu “remains of 40 5.45 mm bullets, that were not in the Army’s arsenal, were discovered.”³⁴ On 23 December 1989 in Sibiu, a soldier participated in the

capture of one Fanea Nicolae who was carrying a Belgian-made 5.6 mm Browning and “a radio transmitter-receiver of the type used by the Romanian ‘Militia’.”³⁵

Timisoara: “...a 5.6 tube was found by a MapN [Army] subunit which was in pursuit of shooters found moving rapidly in the area of the blocs around the [Militia] Inspectorate.”³⁶

Bucharest: According to the Army’s semi-official account of the December events, in the area around the Defense Ministry “there were also found bullets that were atypical for the weapons of Defense Ministry troops, having a caliber of approximately 5.45-5.65 mm.”³⁷ During the trial of Nicolae Ceausescu’s brother, Nicolae Andruta Ceausescu, head of the Securitate’s Baneasa training academy, it was disclosed that at his home “a gun with an infra-red scope and 695 cartridges of 5.6 mm bullets were found.”³⁸ Nicolae Stefan Soucup maintains he found 5.6 caliber bullets on 23 and 24 December in the area around the Television station.³⁹ Savin Chiritescu wrote to *Romania Libera* in October 1990:

“...myself and many colleagues from this tank unit [UM 01060 Bucuresti-Pantelimon] captured armed Arab terrorists (one of whom told us he was from Beirut), who we turned over to the Chief of Staff’s Division. One was a student, upon whom we found a machine gun of 5.62 caliber series UF 060866, 40 cm long, capable of being carried under clothes: the weapon was made from a hard plastic, with the exception of the gun barrel and the trigger. He admitted he had been paid and that he loved Ceausescu greatly. He was wearing leather pants, PUMA sneakers and a black sweater....”⁴⁰

What can we gather from this brief discussion thus far? Well, for one thing, those who wish to draw our attention to the use of these “five something” caliber bullets are from the Army or civilians. (Although the exact caliber clearly matters, the Army seems to acknowledge a window above in noting “5.45-5.65 mm,” suggesting that we should not get too caught up on the exact measurements for our purposes here.)

Indeed, this is par for the course. Members of the former Securitate and Militia generally avoid mentioning these uncharacteristic munitions and certainly don’t want to draw undue attention to them. The question is why? By contrast, the Army must feel they are on pretty comfortable ground that they draw attention to this ammunition and specify that the Army did not have it in their arsenal.

To conclude this section, it seems appropriate to recall the observation of Army General Tiberiu Urdareanu in 1996: “...in contacts with certain cadre of the former Securitate, even some friends among them, [to a person] they negate the existence of the terrorists, saying that the soldiers as a result of poor training shot each other by accident.”⁴¹ Why such firm conviction?!

Vidia...

What about the use of “vidia” tip bullets Prosecutor Voinea also flatly dismisses?

In March 1991, Spiroiu’s predecessor as Defense Minister, General Victor Athanasie Stanculescu, was asked by two journalists if the “terrorists used a particular type of ammunition...against the armed forces.”⁴² Stanculescu responded:

*Yes, as I have already said, I have here two bullets with vidia [grooves]. Our Army does not use this type of ammunition. It is of caliber 5.56. As you can see, the bullet has a jacket that got deformed, while its core remained intact.*⁴³

Bucharest: Stanculescu’s unexpected revelation prompted a participant in the Revolution to challenge Stanculescu’s claim to ignorance as to the source of the bullets. Ironically, while this challenge suggests Stanculescu may have been playing coy and not telling everything he knew, it does not contradict Stanculescu’s claim that the ammunition was not the Army’s, but rather buttresses it:

Balasa Gheorghe: I am very intrigued by the interview given by General Stanculescu to the newspaper ‘Tineretul Liber,’ an interview in which he avoids the truth.

*From [Securitate] Directorate V-a, from the weapons depot, on 23-24 December 1989, DUM-DUM cartridges, special cartridges that did not fit any arm in the arsenal of the Defense Ministry were retrieved. Three or four boxes with these kinds of cartridges were found. The special bullets were 5-6 cm. in length and less thick than a pencil. **Such a cartridge had a white stone tip that was transparent. All of these cartridges I personally presented to be filmed by Mr. Spiru Zeres. All the special cartridges, other than the DUM-DUM [ones] were of West German [FRG] make.** From Directorate V-a we brought these to the former CC building, and on 23-24 December ’89 they were surrendered to U.M. 01305. Captain Dr. Panait, who told us that he had never seen such ammunition before, Major Puiu and Captain Visinescu know about [what was turned over].*

In the former CC of the PCR, all of those shot on the night of 23-24 December ’89 were shot with special bullets. It is absurd to search for the bullet in a corpse that can penetrate a wall....⁴⁴

One of the particularly moving stories of the December events is that of Bogdan Serban Stan, 21 years old and one of three members of the under-22 Rapid Bucuresti rugby team who perished in the events. Bogdan’s mother, Elena Bancila, was determined not to let the memory of her son be forgotten with his tragic death. Bogdan had demonstrated on the night of 21-22 December in University Square and returned to fight at Television where on the night of 23 December at 3:50 am he was shot by an assailant in civilian clothes: “The path of the ‘6 mm vidia’ cartridge blew a hole through his lung and

‘passed through’ the T9 section of his spine, coming to a rest vertically in the bone marrow.’⁴⁵

Engineer Dan Iliescu (no apparent relation to Ion Iliescu), an employee of the Museum of National Art located in the old Royal Palace across from the CC building, alleged in December 1990—therefore prior to the above claim by, and response to, Stanculescu—that those who fired from the museum onto the square below on 22 and 23 December

*...had weapons which sounded different. They had a healthy cadence. The next day [23 December 1989] and over the following days I found bullets in the Museum. They were not normal bullets. They had a rounded head. They appeared to have a lead jacket. **It was of a caliber between five, five something.** The USLasi [USLA, Special Unit for Anti-terrorist Warfare] did not want to leave us a bullet. I asked them to leave me one as a memento. They did not want to. They said that they needed them for the purpose of identification. They noted where they gathered them from. [emphases added]⁴⁶*

Caransebes: Furthermore, there is evidence that the use of “vidia” tip bullets was not exclusive to Bucharest. Asked in February 1990 what he had experienced in December 1989 while participating in the defense of the airport of the southwestern town of Caransebes, Army Captain Mircea Apostol responded:

*No, we only found blood stains and that was it. We didn’t even find shell casings, because these melted away after firing. It sounds incredible. It was a real battle. From our ranks, there were a **few victims shot precisely in vital organs by bullets with a “vidia” tip**, which were not in the arsenal of our Army, but we don’t know against whom we fought. A fact which the enemy now uses. [emphases added]⁴⁷*

Craiova: Finally, there is the case of one of the big personalities of the post-Ceausescu era, Dinel Staicu, a one-time soccer club mogul and owner of a kitschy Ceausescu nostalgic restaurant and park/museum.⁴⁸ Apparently, he “shot 63 bullets during the events,” but “according to him ‘only 11 to 13 stupid people died’⁴⁹:

*“Dinel Staicu moved about in those days unhindered, entering and exiting the prefecture, each time being armed, despite the interrogations to which he had been subject. It would be interesting to know if the seizure of his weapons was recorded because, if not, it means, he still possesses them [the article dates from 1992]. After he was confined to his home for six days, for carrying an arm during the events, he resumed his mission: ‘This time I succeeded to infiltrate Mr. Sandu, since he was my boss and bosses must stay at the helm.’ Implicated during this period in the policing of Valea Rosie (a neighborhood that had been raked by gunfire), forced by the former Militia commander, Colonel Langa, to verify to General Rosu [Army], the existence of **vidia bullets** following his confinement to his home, Dinel Staicu attempted a diversion in order to replace those who had seized power (Nisipeanu, Popa), ...Although [technically-*

speaking] it was still confined to barracks, the Securitate (col. Gheorghe) 'lent Mr. D. Staicu two TAB vehicles and some men from the Securitate's USLA platoon (not from the Militia), even though the Securitate had been ordered not to carry arms. But Mr. Staicu came on behalf of the Front...'

Following the inspection he performed in Valea Rosie, Staicu maintained that there were no terrorists (despite the fact that he himself is an example that contradicts such a denial), his basic training (Commander of Group 2-a USLA) being both for diversion and disinformation. His opinion is that the Army fired millions of cartridges and that anywhere there was a military unit, the earth filled up with them. Only that the military unit from Craiova where there was no firing disputes this (...)⁵⁰

In other words, a member of the USLA denies the existence of vidia bullets and “terrorists”....

Brasov, Sibiu, Bucharest (multiple locations), Braila, Caransebes, and Craiova...⁵¹ Does such geographical distribution suggest accident or pattern? Yet, out-of-hand, Voinea dismisses the existence in December 1989 of either untraditional caliber weapons and bullets, or “vidia” tipped munitions!

MEN IN BLACK: The Recurring Theme of “Black Jumpsuits”

Part of the great riddle of the “terrorists” concerns their clothing. In Brasov, it was noted the individual arrested on 23 December firing a 5.65 mm Thomson automatic was wearing a “black jumpsuit.” The descriptions go by different names—“combinezoane negre,” “salopete negre,” or “de culoar inchis,” for example—but they all note the black or dark outfits of many of those suspected of being “terrorists.”

It is critical to note that we have evidence that the focus on the black clothing of those identified as “terrorists” occurred among participants at the time, and is not merely some *ex post facto* artifact. Major A.D. of Directorate V-a (probably Major Aurel David) recounted in early 1991 that while under arrest on 27 December 1989, the Army soldiers guarding him asked “If” as Major A.D. had sought to convince them, “it isn’t Ceausescu’s guard [i.e. V-a]” who was firing, “then who are the **black-shirted ones** [emphasis added]?”⁵² The report of the SRI [the Securitate’s institutional successor] on Timisoara indirectly confirms Army suspicion when alleging that Army Colonel Constantin Zeca gave the order after 22 December 1989, to shoot at anybody “in a blue, navy blue, or black jumpsuit.”⁵³ Why this clothing in particular, and why the suspicion then?

Some of those shot as “terrorists” turn out to have been wearing “black jumpsuits.” Bucking the hegemony of official, elite interpretations denying the very existence of the “terrorists,” a poster calling himself “Danka” posted the following on the *Jurnalul National* web forum in April 2006:

*“22 decembrie 1989, military unit 010__ at the edge of the Branesti forest. The Branesti forest houses one of the largest munitions depots around the capital. It is said that an explosion at this depot would destroy the Pantelimon neighborhood from the beginning of the no. 14 tram [route]. Towards evening gunfire opened on the unit from the railroad. Everything was a target, [and] **small caliber arms and semi-automatic weapons were being used** [emphasis added; note: possible reference to 5 mm weapons]. Based on the flashes from the gun-barrels it appeared that there were 3 persons hiding among the tracks who opened fire with the goal of creating panic. The soldiers came out of their barracks and set up in the car-park under trucks. They couldn't stay inside the buildings, “the terrorists” were shooting the windows [out]. Even though an alert had been given earlier in the day, nobody was prepared to respond except those on duty. A group of soldiers with officers and n.c.o.s equipped with AK-47s, and TT pistols launched an attack from the surrounding area. All reached their destined locations without problem by nightfall, in part because the intruders were preoccupied with maintaining a continuous gunfire on the unit. At a given moment, the soldiers opened fire, the gunfight lasted less than 10 minutes. Their little UZIs weren't equipped for long-distance and thus could not stand up to the renowned AK 47. One of the terrorists was shot in the head, while the other two were wounded when they tried to flee through a field leading away from the military unit. The three were transported to the guard post where the lights were turned on (until then the unit had been in complete darkness) and we realized that one of the two survivors was in fact a woman. All three were olive-skinned, clothed in **black jumpsuits** [emphasis added] and the two wounded survivors struggled to say something in Arabic. After a half hour an ARO [vehicle] of the Army arrived saying they had come from the Chief of Staff's Division and they took all three. After a few days all the soldiers who participated in the activities of that night were made to sign a declaration pledging not to divulge anything about what had happened. All of this is true and can easily be verified.”⁵⁴*

Another small group of people wearing “black jumpsuits” held a military convoy under fire near the city of Buzau. On the evening of 23 December 1989, a military convoy from Piatra Neamt *en route* to Bucharest reached the community of Maracineni near Buzau. Members of the local military unit told the soldiers from Piatra Neamt that

*...the unit had been attacked by two people, a civilian and Militia NCO, who disappeared with an Olcit [car] and an ABI vehicle [an armored transport used exclusively by the Securitate's USLA]. Shortly after [being told] this, gunfire opened on the convoy. And gunfire reopened on the local military unit....those from the unit fired back with ordinance that lit the sky, in this way enabling them to observe a group of 3-4 armed people, **wearing black jumpsuits (“salopete negre”)** who were shooting while constantly changing position. At the same time, on the radio frequencies of the convoy, they received messages about coming devastating attacks, and even Soviet intervention. All of these proved to be simple disinformation. The next day, in a moment of calm, villagers brought the soldiers*

food, and related how the terrorists had occupied attics of their houses. They said they [the occupiers] were Romanians and that in a few words they had ordered [the villagers] to let them into the attics of their houses....In general, they shot at night, but on 25 December the cannonade continued during the day.... Curiously, the 'fighting' in Maracineni continued until 30 December. Who and for whom were they trying to impress? [emphasis added]⁵⁵

Indeed, there are three key aspects here: 1) this was not a heavily populated area, thereby undermining arguments about “operetta-like” fake warfare to impress the population, 2) it is difficult to explain this episode as the result of “misunderstandings” between units, and 3) the gunfire lasted well over a week, a fact that is difficult to ascribe to confusion.

Did the black-suited ones have any affiliation to any institution? After all, is it not odd that so many of them would appear to be dressed in the same garb? In 1990, an engineer, Mircea Georgescu, expressed his frustration about the post-December disappearance of the “terrorists” in Sibiu, Nicu Ceausescu’s fiefdom, as follows:

“Who fired from the attics of Sibiu on 21-22 December 1989? Who are the so-called terrorists? Where are their guns with scopes and unmistakable cadence? Silence on all fronts: ...

*c) A fighter from the guards, along with his brother, captured in these days (23-25 dec.) some 8 **securisti** among whom: one about 45-50 years old, at the State Theater Sibiu, we surrendered him to the Commander at the Army House. He was taken under guard by 4 civilian fighters (one in front had a club in his hand) and by a soldier with a gun at his side. **He was dressed in a vest (like a smith’s) and a pant-suit (combinezon) that was black or a very dark grey...brown with short hair, well-built and 1,70-1,75 m tall....What, nobody knows anything about this guy either? ...[emphases added]**”⁵⁶*

Lt. Col. Aurel Dragomir, former commander of the “Nicolae Balcescu” Military Officers School in Sibiu, described in 1994 those killed as “terrorists” in Sibiu in December 1989:

*...On the morning of 22 December...I was informed that on the rooftops there were some suspicious persons. I saw 2-3 people in **black jumpsuits**. The Militia told me that they weren’t their people. At noon there appeared 10 to 15 people in **black jumpsuits** who opened massive gunfire on the crowds and soldiers. I ordered them to respond with fire. I headed to the infirmary—the reserve command site, and col. Pircalabescu [head of the Patriotic Guards] called and asked me “why was there gunfire?” I told him we were being attacked. He told me to cease fire. Ilie Ceausescu [Ceausescu’s brother, and an Army General] told me to surrender. I slammed the telephone down. Then [Army General] Stanculescu called. I told him that we are under attack. **Stanculescu said to me: ‘Defend yourselves!’....The attackers had on black jumpsuits under which they had on civilian clothes....Weapons and ammunition that weren’t in the arsenal of the Army were found, guns with silencers were found, that aren’t in the***

*Army's arsenal....After the events declarations given to the investigating commissions disappeared, notebooks filled with the recordings of officers on duty (ofiterii de serviciu), and a map that noted from which houses gunfire came. **The dead who were in jumpsuits** and had several layers of clothing were identified: they were cadre from the Sibiu Interior Ministry (Militia and **Securitate**).... (“black jumpsuits” emphases and “weapons and ammunition...” emphasis added; rest in original)⁵⁷*

Finally, in this context, the comments of a Codrut H. in July 1990 about what he and other civilians found when they occupied Securitate headquarters in Brasov on the night of 22 December: “What appeared suspicious to me was that the Securitate there appeared to have been prepared [for something].... Out front of the building there was a white ARO [automobile] in which there were **complete antiterrorist kits** [emphasis added].” What else did the civilians find there?...**combinezoane negre**.⁵⁸

Where and From Where Was There Gunfire?

So if there is evidence of ammunition that cannot be accounted for in standard arsenals and of people killed and identified as “dead terrorists”—who clearly do not fit into the standard categories of those killed during the events—what is perhaps the next logical question? That might be: where and from where did the gunfire come?

To continue with Sibiu and Lt. Col. Dragomir’s claims, former Prosecutor Marian Valer, who claimed to have “noticed shortly after the publication of his resignation from this position [claiming obstruction] that I was benefiting from the services of the organization of Virgil Magureanu [i.e. the SRI, the Securitate’s institutional successor],” stated in September 1990:

*...during the events of December 1989 in Sibiu, the army found a map with the **safehouses** of the Securitate, around the city’s military units, in which Securitate cadre were to be placed to act against them, in the eventuality of a defection by the army from the Ceausist regime. Following the investigations conducted, it was determined that from these same houses gunfire was opened on some of these military units, beginning with the afternoon of 22 December 1989, therefore after the overthrow of the dictatorship. It was also established that, in general, in these respective houses lived former cadre of the Securitate and Militie, who had retired or crossed into reserve status, or informers of the Securitate, and also that, following the outbreak of the antiCeausist demonstrations in Sibiu, at these houses entered cars that had license plates from other counties, for example Constanta, Iasi, [and] Bacau. Thus upon the [Army unit] U.M. 01512, gunfire was opened from the house at no. 7 Stefan Cel Mare Street...in which lived the families of a former Sibiu Securitate commander and an informer of the Securitate...On U.M. 1606 there was shooting from no. 47 Moldoveanu Street, in which lived a former Militia chief of Sibiu county, while upon U.M. 01080 there was fire from vila Branga [see earlier discussion of this location referencing five*

*mm caliber bullets] ...It was determined that the owners of these places were not at home during the events, having left several days earlier, and that in some houses there was no furniture or signs of habitation. The map of the **safehouses** of the Securitate and Militie came into possession of Lt. Col. Dragomir, commander of the Sibiu garrison, but when he was asked to present it to the investigatory commission he said he could not find it.⁵⁹*

In 1991, Dumitru Mazilu, a key player in the December events who quickly fell out of favor with those who seized power and was marginalized, posed these appropriate observations about the fighting in Bucharest:

The involvement of some units and soldiers of the Interior Ministry during this particular period [after 22 December] is confirmed by the following observations: a) the sites from which crowds were fired upon certainly belonged to the Interior Ministry (for example in the case of the buildings near the Central University Library, that belonged to the Guard Directorate [V-a] of the Ceausescu] or with great probability (the apartments from the Building General across from the work space of the tyrant; the apartments near the villas of Elena and Nicolae Ceausescu, as well as those near objects of strategic importance, such as the Defense Department, Television, and Romanian Radio etc.)...⁶⁰

...Without a doubt two other issues could play a major role in finding out who those were who were firing on Television: a) First, to request the identity of the meeting houses of the organs of repression, in the area around the Television. Then to verify who the people were who used these houses in the days from the afternoon of 22 December until 27, 28 December. Again these sites could play a big role in the success of the investigations; b) Then to find out the other places from which people were fired upon in these dramatic days and nights. And those who put their places at the disposition, either willingly or under duress, as well as their neighbors, could play a big role in discovering the terrorists.⁶¹

In 2003, Senator Sergiu Nicolaescu, who headed the first investigation into the December events back in the early 1990s was asked by an interviewer, “Mr. Senator, by now I also have reached the conclusion that in order for something like this to function there had to exist at least two things: a plan and a leadership. Who led it?” Nicolaescu responded as follows:

*There are links to the Securitate here. They had made this strategy. They had long had this mission, when these people were selected and conspired and received their orders. In order to understand the phenomenon we started an investigation from the ground floor, with the most basic information. **There existed safehouses.** I asked officially for information about these safehouses. I don't know if this is what they are technically-called, but we are talking about apartments, empty spaces in safehouses, some even in hotels, while another category that should not be confused with the first is that of guesthouses, where their people lived. That was something else altogether. They met there with*

*informers. That is different. In the safehouses there were weapons and military outfits of different grades and specializations, as well as civilian clothing. I asked the SRI [the Securitate's official institutional heir] for the list, but they never gave me it. I had the list of the apartments from which there was gunfire. I attempted to reconstitute [a list] with the help of specialists and identified the places from which there was gunfire. My intention was to compare this list with the list of **safehouses**. They wouldn't give it to me. Thus, I made recourse, unofficially, to a different method to secure a copy of the list of **safehouses**. It turned out exactly as I suspected—they matched exactly. Thus I was able to learn who were the terrorists from this category who acted, since there were some houses from which there was no gunfire, where they did not go into action. [emphasis added]⁶²*

The Shrinking Terrain of Denial: Individuals with Credible Access to Information...Identify The “Terrorists”

What many Romanians and Romanianists don't know or cannot bring themselves to acknowledge is that we have at least three sources who have admitted that their unit/institution provided the “terrorists” of December 1989, three sources whose details roughly match. These things—to say the least—don't grow on trees in post-communist Romania. The three sources I shall invoke here all spoke in the first five years of the post-Revolution era. Only on exceedingly rare occasions have these admissions been repeated and analyzed—usually devoid of context—and certainly short of my own research, no one else has gathered them together in one place.

One of the more persistently annoying characteristics of articles and books on December 1989 is the tendency to have no criteria—short of partisan political ones—for evaluating the credibility of assertions and claims about the events. Thus, the civilian or Army soldier who declares that because in his or her own personal experience he or she did not see any “terrorists” and believes (often only in retrospect) he or she was sent on a wild goose chase and that there were no “terrorists” anywhere during the Revolution is readily accepted at face value. The logical fallacy of deducing that from one's own personal experience, a certain proposition cannot be true, should be plain for all to see.

More important, perhaps, is the inattention to basic questions concerning 1) would the person making the claim have been in a position or had a plausible opportunity to learn such information, and 2) in the case of a “whistleblower,” is their claim to threats and harassment because of disclosure plausible? The Romanian historiography of people shooting off their mouths who would have been unlikely to have had access to the information they now claim and whose fear of reprisal seems subjective is abundant.

Admission I:

It will—and should—be mind boggling to the outsider, but an alleged meeting on the evening of Christmas Day 1989 at the USLA Headquarters shortly after the execution of the Ceausescus, has garnered almost no investigation and discussion inside or outside

Romania. Enough people have made reference to the meeting, from enough different entities and with different interests and equities—including USLA Commander Gheorghe Ardeleanu himself, a civilian representative of the Front (Mihai Montanu), former USLA officer Marian Romanescu, and Army General Tiberiu Urdareanu—to suggest that at the very least the meeting took place.⁶³ One would think this meeting might be of some historical interest, since the next day, 26 December 1989, the official order was issued integrating the remnants of the former Securitate and Interior Ministry into the Defense Ministry.

In 1991, former USLA Captain Marian Romanescu described Ardeleanu’s comments to his troops at this alleged meeting as follows:

“On 25 December at around 8 pm, after the execution of the dictators, Colonel Ardeleanu gathered the unit’s members into an improvised room and said to them:

‘The Dictatorship has fallen! The Unit’s members are in the service of the people. The Romanian Communist Party [PCR] is not disbanding! It is necessary for us to regroup in the democratic circles of the PCR—the inheritor of the noble ideas of the people of which we are a part!...Corpses were found, individuals with USLAC (Special Unit for Antiterrorist and Commando Warfare) identity cards and identifications with the 0620 stamp of the USLA, identity cards that they had no right to be in possession of when they were found...’ He instructed that the identity cards [of members of the unit] had to be turned in within 24 hours, at which time all of them would receive new ones with Defense Ministry markings.”⁶⁴ (emphasis in the original)

Ardeleanu’s statement begs the question: if these were non-USLA personnel, why exactly were they trying to pass themselves off as USLA personnel...to the point of losing their lives? At the very least, his statement informs the idea that the individuals with these identity cards were innocent victims—because otherwise he would likely not have stated that they had “no right” to possess these identity documents, but instead would have presented them as heroes who had died in the name of the Revolution. Ardeleanu’s comments can be interpreted as the beginnings of a cover-up, designed to reverse the popular understanding of the USLA’s responsibility for the December bloodshed. This was a classic case of “plausible deniability”—now dead, and clearly having been involved in suspicious behavior, Ardeleanu denied any knowledge of them and any affiliation of them with his unit and command.

Army General Tiberiu Urdareanu also claims to have been present at the meeting. In a 1996 memoir, he wrote that the new Defense Minister, General Nicolae Militaru, took the floor in a speech that focused principally on the secretive nature of and confusion surrounding the USLA. Militaru stressed that now was the time for reconciliation between the Defense Ministry and the Interior Ministry (i.e. Securitate) and appealed at the end “for those involved in the genocide: put an end to it!” As Urdareanu concluded:

“From his [Military’s] discussion it was clear that, among other forces, the USLA were definitely taking part [in the terrorist actions], that they had prepared for this for many years, and it was not known how much money their preparation had cost.”⁶⁵

Urdareanu asserts that USLA Commander Ardeleanu also talked at the session, essentially echoing the comments related by Romanescu above:

“Colonel Ardeleanu, the USLA Commander, palely observed that it wasn’t they [the USLA] who were fighting, but that they [the “terrorists”] were acting in the name of the USLA, but his intervention went unnoticed.”⁶⁶

Enhancing the authenticity and credibility of Urdareanu’s claim, he notes that two Securitate officials spoke at this same session and made two requests—one, that Securitate phone lines that had been cut be reconnected, and two, that the situation of the State Archives be specified. (Notably, Colonel Gheorghe Ratiu, head of the Securitate’s First Directorate in December 1989, complained in 1995: “From 24 December, our special telephone and governmental lines were cut... and even though I presented myself directly as a head of central directorate of the Defense Ministry, military commanders refused to allow me to communicate with my personnel...”⁶⁷) Finally, Urdareanu maintains he also asked a question of senior Army officials at the meeting:

“...personally I asked that information on the empty residences [i.e. safehouses] in town used by the Securitate be put at our disposal, being convinced that it was from these that the gunfire was coming, and I received an affirmative response.”⁶⁸

In other words, the previously-discussed safehouse issue.

Admission II:

The Revelations of former Timisoara Securitate officer Roland Vasilevici

Two months after the violence that marked Ceausescu’s overthrow—when in Bucharest the official and media rehabilitation of the USLA was already underway (discussed farther down)—a three-part series entitled “Piramida Umbrelor [Pyramid of Shadows]” appeared in the cultural/political Timisoara weekly, *Orizont* on 2, 9, and 16 March 1990. The articles appeared under the name “Puspoki F.,” but it was clear from the text of the articles that the author must have some connection to the former Securitate or Militia, because he described the inner workings of these organs in their dealings with Pastor Laszlo Tokes, a focal point of the uprising against the Ceausescu regime, and their actions once protests began outside his residence on 15-16 December 1989. Significantly, the author related the responsibilities and actions of the USLA, including their weaponry, munitions (including “special cartridges”), clothing, and physical disposition—details which were later to be substantiated elsewhere. It was pretty clear in his discussion of the USLA and the “Comando” unit (a likely reference to the USLAC) that he believed them to have been the “terrorists” who had claimed so many lives.

In 1991, a 140 plus page book published in Timisoara, also entitled *Piramida Umbrelor*, appeared. Its author was Roland Vasilevici. William Totok later interviewed Vasilevici in 1995, and it turned out that Vasilevici had worked for the Securitate unit that surveilled “culte [churches]” (he was specifically responsible for Roman Catholic churches) in Timisoara under the command of Radu Tinu.⁶⁹ The book included (lightly-edited) the passages that had originally appeared under the name “Puspoki F.” in *Orizont* and further elaborated on them. It is pretty clear that Vasilevici was the original source of those articles.

The March 1990 *Orizont* series was and has been pretty much ignored in Romania—except among the former Securitate. From jail, Radu Tinu, the Timis County Deputy Securitate chief, sought to counter the accusations “during March 1990, in the weekly “Orizont” in which a certain Puspok accused me of nationalism.”⁷⁰ In March 1992, retired Securitate Colonel Ion Lemnaru wrote in *Spionaj-Contraspionaj* about the 1990 pamphlet of Romeo Vasiliu, “Piramida Umbrelor,” identifying the author as Roland Vasilevici, publishing Vasilevici’s address, and then citing an extended section of the text of the pamphlet (identical to what is in the March 1990 *Orizont* article). The section that is cited precisely concerns allegations about the USLA’s role in the Timisoara repression and terrorism—it is this that is clearly the focus of Colonel Lemnaru’s ire.⁷¹

When Vasilevici was preparing to release his book, he maintained that he was “receiving many threatening and ‘dead line’ phone calls in the middle of the night.”⁷² He said two to three cars were posted outside his residence, and that he was accosted by six individuals when was on his way to the police station to file a complaint. A former colleague informed him that he “had been contacted by the same Radu Tinu [by now out of jail] and was instructed to alert the network with the goal of by all means impeding the publication of the book.” According to the *Cuvintul* interviewer, when he spoke to Vasilevici by phone, Vasilevici was “very scared... such a man generally does not panic so easily.” When in December 1994, Vasilevici went on a local Timisoara television channel, Radu Tinu showed up at the station attempting to interrupt the transmission of the broadcast!⁷³

On the question of the existence of the “terrorists,” Radu Tinu would agree with Prosecutor Dan Voinea: “There were no terrorists! They [those who seized power and were on TV] invented them...”⁷⁴

Admission III:

The comments of an anonymous former USLA recruit

As in the case of the “Puspoki” series, so it was in the case of the comments of a former USLA recruit. Asked about the significance of this short A.M. Press news agency dispatch on page 3 of the daily *Romania Libera* on 28 December 1994 (“Dezvaluiri despre implicarea USLA in evenimentele din decembrie ’89 [Revelations on USLA involvement in the events of December ‘89]”), Romanian journalists and intellectuals have no knowledge of it—not surprising—and dismiss it as unimportant. Strangely, a

former USLA officer read it and was so incensed he immediately published responses condemning it and identifying and denigrating the similarly anonymous correspondent of the dispatch (see footnote #76). Why such a zealous reaction?

Here are the comments of the recruit that precipitated the reaction:

*“A youth who did his military service with the USLA troops declared to A.M. Press’ Dolj correspondent: ‘I was in Timisoara and Bucharest in December ’89. In addition to us [USLA] draftees, recalled professionals, who wore **black camouflage outfits**, were dispatched. Antiterrorist troop units and these professionals received live ammunition. In Timisoara demonstrators were shot at short distances. I saw how the skulls of those who were shot would explode. I believe the masked ones, **using their own special weapons, shot with exploding bullets. In January 1990, all the draftees from the USLA troops were put in detox. We had been drugged.** We were discharged five months before our service was due to expire in order to lose any trace of us. Don’t publish my name. I fear for me and my parents. When we trained and practiced we were separated into ‘friends’ and ‘enemies.’ The masked ones were the ‘enemies’ who we had to find and neutralize. I believe the masked ones were the terrorists’.* [emphases added]”⁷⁵

Note the references to black jumpsuits, special weapons, exploding bullets, and drugs.⁷⁶

The USLAC: The Missing Men of the Romanian Revolution

But what evidence do we have that the “USLAC”—a reference attributed to Ardeleanu, and alluded to by Vasilevici (“commandos,” he specified the involvement of Arabs in his book) and the anonymous recruit (the “professionals in black camouflage”)—in fact existed? To me, the most convincing evidence comes from the comments of Dr. Sergiu Tanasescu, the medical trainer of the Rapid Bucharest soccer team, who was directly involved in the fighting at the Central Committee building. One has to realize that until his comments in March 1990, the very acronym “USLAC” and its extension does not appear to have appeared in the Romanian media—and has very rarely appeared since. Here is what he said:

Ion K. Ion (reporter at the weekly Cuvintul): The idea that there were foreign terrorists has been circulating in the press.

*Sergiu Tanasescu (trainer for the Bucharest Rapid soccer club): **I ask that you be so kind as to not ask me about the problem because it is a historical issue. Are we in agreement?***

I.I.: O.K.

*Tanasescu: I caught a terrorist myself, with my own hands. He was 26 years old and had two ID cards, one of a student in the fourth year of Law School, and another one of **Directorate V-a U.S.L.A.C. Special Unit for Antiterrorist and Commando Warfare** [emphasis added]. He was drugged. I found on him a type of chocolate, “Pasuma” and “Gripha” brands. It was an extraordinarily powerful drug that gave a state of euphoria encouraging aggression and destruction, and an ability to go without sleep for ten days. He had a supersophisticated weapon, with nightsights [i.e. lunetisti], with a system for long-distance sound...*

Ion K. Ion: What happened to those terrorists who were caught?

S.T.: We surrendered them to organs of the military prosecutor. We caught many in the first days, their identity being confirmed by many, by Colonel Octavian Nae [Dir. V-a], Constantin Dinescu (Mircea’s uncle), [Army Chief of Staff, General] Guse, but especially by [Securitate Director] Vlad who shouted at those caught why they didn’t listen to his order to surrender, they would pretend to be innocent, but the gun barrels of their weapons were still warm from their exploits. After they would undergo this summary interrogation, most of them were released.

I.I.: Why?

S.T.: Because that’s what Vlad ordered. On 22 December we caught a Securitate major who was disarmed and let go, only to capture him again the next day, when we took his weapon and ammo and again Vlad vouched for him, only to capture him on the third day yet again. We got annoyed and then arrested all of them, including Vlad and Colonel Nae, especially after a girl of ours on the first basement floor where the heating system is located found him transmitting I don’t know what on a walkie-talkie.

I.I.: When and how were the bunkers discovered?

S.T.: Pretty late in the game, in any case only after 24 December. Some by accident, most thanks to two individuals [with a dog].⁷⁷

Tanasescu’s comments are a “treasure trove” of insights on what happened. To begin with, at a time when it appears the term USLAC had yet to appear in the press, he gave both the acronym’s extension and its relationship to the Fifth Directorate. Second, the identity of those caught and suspected as “terrorists” is known by a high-ranking Fifth Directorate official and Securitate Director General Vlad. Third, we see a problem that lay at the heart of madness: with the Securitate having “sided” with the Revolution, the fox was in the hen-house, so-to-speak. Finally, Tanasescu’s blunt effort to cut off discussion about foreign involvement during the Revolution suggests someone who knew just what a sensitive question this was.

The next time we appear to find any discussion of the term USLAC in the Romanian press is 1991—and past the republication of the 1991 comments, the term has essentially disappeared from the lexicon of the Revolution...and with it any questions that it might provoke. Dan Badea summarized USLA Captain Marian Romanescu’s explanation of the USLAC. Given all the details we have seen in the many quotes from participants in the events—the discussion of black jumpsuits and of Arabs—as well as the admissions of former Securitate officer Vasilievici and the former USLA recruit, much of this should sound remarkably familiar...

*“The USLAC Commandos: Those who had and have knowledge about the existence and activities of the shock troops subordinated directly to Ceausescu remained quiet and continue to do so out of fear or out of calculation. Much has been said about individuals in **black jumpsuits** (emphasis added), with tattoos on their left hand and chest, mercenary fanatics who acted at night, killing with precision and withdrawing when they were encircled to the underground tunnels of Bucharest. Much was said, then nobody said anything, as if nothing had ever happened. Overlapping the Fifth Directorate and the USLA, **the USLAC commandos** were made up of individuals who ‘worked’ undercover in different places. **Many were foreign students, doctors and thugs committed** with heart and soul to the dictator. **Many were Arabs** who knew with precision the nooks and crannies of Bucharest, Brasov and other towns in Romania. (emphasis in original).”⁷⁸*

It is noteworthy in this context that in 1994, Army General Dan Ioan specified before the Senatorial Commission investigating the December events, that among those (some armed) civilian suspects arrested as terrorists, “verified more carefully, some of them had something to do with the M.I. [Interior Ministry, i.e. Securitate based on his earlier discussion].”⁷⁹

The discussion of the USLAC as traversing Directorate V-a and the USLA—taken against the backdrop of what Tanasescu reported was the “Directorate V-a USLAC” identity card on the terrorist he arrested—sheds light on the often confusing admixture of Directorate V-a and the USLA in many descriptions. Indeed, here we are reminded of some of the reporting from the time of the Revolution itself: on 30 December 1989, for example, Blaine Harden of *The Washington Post* wrote about suspicions that the “terrorists” wearing “black jumpsuits”—“Securitate commandos” were members of the Fifth Directorate.⁸⁰ He may therefore have been describing the USLAC.

Foreign Involvement

So far in this piece, we have seen references to the arrest or killing as “terrorists” of the following as apparent foreigners, notably Arabs: 1) the arrest of one with a PSL in Bucharest, 2) the arrest of another with a PSL, apparently somewhere near Brasov, 3) the revelations of soldiers who killed and arrested several in the Pantelimon area of Bucharest (I will consider these two revelations one and the same for our purposes here).

Years after the Revolution, there are still claims that Arabs were captured elsewhere: in 2005, Catalin Radulescu told a journalist that “two Arabs were caught in Pitesti, dressed in **combinezoane negre** [emphasis added], and armed with Carpati pistols.”⁸¹ Later we will see reports written by two Securitate officers immediately after the events—apparently required of them by Army officials—attesting to the killing of Arab “terrorists” in the area around the Defense Ministry building in Bucharest. We shall also see how a weapon registered to a member of the Securitate’s Fifth Directorate just happened to show up in the hands of a man with a Libyan passport in his billfold who was shot in the Central Committee building in Bucharest on the night of 22 December.

Indeed, the presence and activity of these foreign, apparently mostly Arab terrorists, was almost prosaic. Liviu Viorel Craciun (appropriately enough craciun means “Christmas”), the so-called “First Interior Minister of the Revolution” in one of the protogovernments that tried to form in the CC after the Ceausescus fled and—a source of much confusion in research on the events (more on this below)—a former USLA officer until 1986, reported that on 28 December 1989: “...in the morning five cadavers were collected and a rough count was made, out of the five terrorist cadavers found in the street, two belonged to Arab mercenaries... The shot terrorists could not be identified and they did not seem to interest anyone.”⁸²

So what was the role of foreigners, specifically Arabs, in the Revolution? Interesting in this regard is a report dated 1 March 1990 by Lt-Colonel Ion Aurel Rogojan, who in 1989 was Securitate Director General Vlad’s chief of cabinet staff. As B. Mihalache speculates somebody must have been interested in this question, “since Rogojan was ordered to write a report on it.”⁸³ Rogojan wrote in his 1 March 1990 report that he “has knowledge of the fact that between the Department of State Security and the ‘Al Fatah’ Security [service] of the Palestinian Liberation Organization there existed relations of cooperation based on a protocol.” Rogojan continues in this report:

“At the same time, some activities for the training of USLA cadres abroad were carried out (the group was led by reserve colonel Firan, former chief of general staff of the mentioned unit). The protocol was established in the period 1979-1980 and a copy can be found in the protocol relations division of the former Independent Judicial Secretariat Service of the DSS [i.e. Securitate]. In connection with the existence of this protocol, I was asked in recent weeks, by Colonel Ardeleanu Gheorghe, USLA Commander. The Special Unit for Antiterrorist Warfare was coordinated on behalf of the DSS’ Executive Bureau by General-Colonel Iulian Vlad in the period 1977-1987, and after that by Secretary of State General-Major Alexie Stefan and Deputy Minister Major General Bucurescu Gianu. In the USLA there existed a special detachment for antiterrorist intervention, organized in three shifts and subordinated to the chief of the general staff. I don’t have any data concerning the activity of the USLA in the period of the December ’89 events.”⁸⁴

It should also be abundantly clear here that Rogoian was being asked to write not just about the role of outside forces, but specifically about the role of the USLA in December 1989. Once again, why such interest in the USLA?

In this regard, further claims related by former USLA Captain Marian Romanescu to Dan Badea, are to say the least intriguing:

Several days before the outbreak of the December events, the commander of the USLA forces—col. ARDELEANU GHEORGHE (his real name being BULA MOISE)—left for Iran, bringing with him a great many gifts; and a car's load of maps, bags, pens, sacks, etc. What did Col. Ardeleanu need these for in Iran? What was the use of having the head of the USLA go? What did he negotiate with the Iranians before the arrival of Ceausescu [18-19 December]? Could he have contracted the bringing into the country of some shock troops, as they are called, to enforce the guard at the House of the Republic, the civic Center and the principal residences of the dictator? If not for that reason, why? Because it is known what followed...

On 22 December, col. Ardeleanu gave the order that 50 blank cover IDs, with the stamp of the Department of Civil Aviation, be released. The order is executed by Gradisteanu Aurel from the coordinating service of that department—a Securitate captain in reserve—and by lt. Col. SOMLEA ALEXANDRU, the latter receiving the IDs and putting them where they needed to be. It is known that the majority of USLA cadre work under the cover of being in the Militia. But who did these IDs cover in this situation? [emphases and capitalization in original]⁸⁵

We know from the revelations of a former worker (engineer Hristea Todor) at the Securitate's special unit "P," that the new Front leadership was sufficiently suspicious of Arab presence that "General Militaru referred to the transfer of some units from the MI and Securitate to the Defense Ministry. He said the USLA had transformed into terrorists. The electronic (telephone) surveillance of certain objectives was started up again—in particular Arab embassies."⁸⁶ (Note: this appears yet another reference to the aforementioned meeting at USLA headquarters on the evening of 25 December.) Gheorghe Ratiu, head of the Securitate's First Directorate, maintains that, on Director Vlad's orders, between 25 and 27 December 1989 he was tasked with finding out the "truth" concerning the "foreign terrorists" reported to be in the hospitals and morgues; he had to resort to subterfuge to verify the situation, since Army personnel were denying him entrance.⁸⁷

Notably, of course, with these exceptions, the former Securitate and their apologists—whom as Army General Urdareanu suggests uniformly don't believe in the existence of real terrorists in December 1989, yet who love to blame foreign interference for Ceausescu's overthrow (in particular, Russians, Hungarians, and Jews)—do not like to make reference to or talk about "Arab terrorists."

Further evidence of the involvement of “Arab terrorists” comes from the behavior in late December 1989, as much as the later statements, of the usually garrulous Silviu Brucan. In August 1990, Brucan would allege the involvement of “some 30 foreigners,” according to him, mostly Palestinian, who had been trained by the Securitate—what Michael Shafir termed “the first admission of foreign intervention by a member of the December 1989 leadership.”⁸⁸ Reminiscent of Tanasescu’s curt response to the reporter’s question about the involvement of foreign terrorists (discussed above)—“I ask that you be so kind as to...” not ask me about this—back on 29 December 1989, Brucan, at the time a key decision-maker in the new Front leadership (he would leave in February), told *Le Monde* that the issue was “very delicate” and “involving diplomatic implications that must still be worked out”; “better to be cautious,” he opined.⁸⁹ That was, of course, no denial; indeed, it sounds like the new leadership was trying to find a solution to the dilemma they found themselves in.

Suspicion, in particular, surrounded the role of Libyans, which, as we have seen, at the very least, somehow found themselves in areas of gunfire in December. Sergiu Nicolaescu claims—I have been unable to verify this—that of all the countries to recognize the new National Salvation Front government, running to the top of the line to be first was...Qadafi’s Libya!⁹⁰ The “anonymous plotters” who leaked information to Liviu Valenas of *Baricada* in August 1990 maintained that “It isn’t accidental that on 25 December 1989, the first plane bringing aid came from Libya. However, when it went on its return route it was loaded with people. In the almost complete chaos that dominated at the time, the New Power [i.e. the Front] did not know what the plane to Libya was carrying (it left from Otopeni, when the airport was still closed to traffic).”⁹¹ In 1994, two journalists specified that the plane in question on the 25th was a DC9 and that “40 Arabs” had been loaded aboard, and noted that they had learned that on 28-29 December 1989, “the [Otopeni’s] airport archive had disappeared.”⁹²

Michael Shafir at Radio Free Europe Research at the time noted in October 1990 that “unconfirmed but very reliable military and governmental Romanian sources interviewed by RFE said that shortly after the capture of Palestinians, Libyans, and other Arabs who had fought on the side of pro-Ceausescu forces, Quadhafi had threatened to kill all Romanian specialists in Libya if the Arabs were not allowed to leave Romania.”⁹³ Certainly, this is what Constantin Vranceanu hinted at in September 1990 in *Romania Libera* when he wrote of “Plan Z-Z”—according to him, “practically an alliance, on many levels, including military between Romania and several other countries with totalitarian regimes (Iran, Libya, Syria), to which was added the PLO... which called for the other parties to intervene with armed forces to reestablish state order when one of the leaderships was in trouble”:

“Several weeks after 22 December, the president of one of the countries directly involved threatened the Romanian government that it would make recourse to reprisals against those several thousand Romania citizens who were working in that country if [the Romanian government] did not return the foreign terrorists, [whether] alive or dead. This blackmail worked and a Romanian plane went on an unusual route to a Polish airport, from where the ‘contents,’ unusually

including the able-bodied, wounded, and coffins, were transferred to another plane, that took off in an unknown direction.”⁹⁴

Nestor Ratesh quotes one of Ceausescu’s senior party henchman, Ion Dinca, as having stated at his trial in early February 1990:

“During the night of 27-28 [of January 1990] at 12:30 A.M., I was called by several people from the Prosecutor’s Office to tell what I knew about the agreement entitled Z.Z. between Romania and five other states providing for the dispatching of terrorist forces to Romania in order to intervene in case of a military Putsch. This agreement Z.Z. is entitled ‘the End of the End.’ I stated then, and I am stating now to you, that I have never been involved in this agreement, neither I nor other people. And I was told: Only you and two other people know this. I stated that and a detailed check was made in order to prove that I was not involved in such acts.”⁹⁵

Relatedly, in July 1990, Liviu Valenas noted that,

“On 24 January 1990, the new Foreign Minister of Romania announced on Television and Radio that a series of secret treaties between the R.S.R. [Romanian Socialist Republic] and third countries had been abrogated, and are no longer valid and operational for the new Romania. The New Power pledged to deal with these countries concerning Romania’s obligations through the abrogation of these accords. An ambiguous text, apparently launched by Sergiu Celac’s group, led public opinion in Romania to believe that these treaties concerned ‘terrorist assistance.’”⁹⁶

It is noteworthy that in the context of a series entitled “The Truth about the U.S.L.A.,” (more on this infamous series below), Horia Alexandrescu paused on 14 March 1990 to quote from a 1 February article by another journalist about TAROM flight 259 (to Warsaw and back):

“24 January, 4 PM: After the aircraft was inspected [“controlul antiterorist”] (after the Revolution of 22 December, ‘soimi’ as those who performed antiterrorist protection [i.e. USLA] were called by the pilots, were removed from both internal and external TAROM flights, even though all airlines have such teams), the plane left for Bucharest. Meanwhile, however, the 45 Libyan passengers, who had gotten off for 5-6 hours in a layover at Otopeni, wanted to cross ‘the Polish border.’”⁹⁷

According to Alexandrescu, the Polish authorities would not allow the TAROM plane to leave Poland, so it sat on the runway in Warsaw...until a second TAROM plane came—this time, according to Alexandru, including “uslasi”—the moral of the story of course being that the USLA needed to be put back on flights as soon as possible.⁹⁸ It is possible this is the plane Vranceanu was referring to in the quotation above. One thing’s

for sure, this seemingly insignificant incident got unusual media coverage, in particular with regard to the USLA.

Not surprisingly, in June 2006, Prosecutor General Dan Voinea reiterated his contention that there was no foreign involvement/intervention in the December 1989 Romanian Revolution!

The USLA: At the Very Least...Knowledgeable about the “Terrorists”

What is, of course, most interesting about the USLA relationship to the USLAC is that during and immediately after December 1989, the USLA seemed more knowledgeable than anybody else about the characteristics of the weapons and tactics of the “terrorists.” The question, of course, is why? How would they have known?

The Army daily *Armata Poporului* noted in mid-January 1990 the many requests they had received concerning the “lunetisti” who appear to have operated during the December violence... Interestingly, to whom did they go to answer these inquiries: a member of the USLA. Here is the passage in question:

“How can we explain the amazing precision of the terrorist gunfire: even though in the majority of cases, they operated at night, most victims were shot—mortally—in the head, throat, or heart?”

“To this question—which we took from letters and telephone calls received at the editorial office—responded major engineer Ion Iliuta, specialist in antiterrorist warfare: ‘Much has been said and written in the press about the infrared scopes of the terrorists. The truth is that they possessed means of sighting that were even more sophisticated, more precise. I am talking about a complex apparatus that possesses a laser marker and a light-amplifier of the LITTON variety...’”⁹⁹

The USLA seemed to have the answer to the nightscope question, but also to the munitions issue—as we have seen, the anomalous five caliber bullets with uncharacteristic properties were a recurrent feature in descriptions of the events. Io[a]n Iliuta and Major Ene Zaharia of the USLA appear to be the sources of the following revelation to Army Major Mihai Floca in early January 1990:

“Upon clearing out the houses surrounding the Television station, it was discovered, that from the staircases they were firing at the house of a writer. Specials of the unit [presumably the USLA] arrived at the conclusion that a 5.6 mm Heckler-Koch pistol with a cartridge that melts away for added impact was used.”¹⁰⁰

Part of their knowledge about these bullets apparently came from their role in “cleaning up” after the “terrorists.” Let us recall the earlier comments of an employee of the

Museum of National Art located in the old Royal Palace across from the CC building in central Bucharest.

...The next day [23 December 1989] and over the following days I found bullets in the Museum. They were not normal bullets. They had a rounded head. They appeared to have a lead jacket. It was of a caliber between five, five something. The USLAs did not want to leave us a bullet. I asked them to leave me at one as a memento. They did not want to. They said that they needed them for the purpose of identification. They noted where they gathered them from.¹⁰¹

How would they have known so well? True, they were good at their craft and experienced, but the following recollection by Army Captain Gheorghe Bobric at Targoviste perhaps is more telling:

*“At the same time, I don’t think [Securitate Lt. Col. Gheorghe] Dinu was foreign to the actions that took place against our unit. For example, one night, he sent me outside, into the courtyard of the unit, and hearing noises from the town, he said to me: ‘Pay attention, these are ABI-uri [vehicles only the USLA possessed]...In 10 minutes, they will begin to fire...’ He knew it all, as if he were confirming a plan known well in advance. And he said to me: ‘**The terrorists and antiterrorists are trained according to the same standards and principles, they undergo the same training.**’ [emphasis added]”¹⁰²*

So, common training. In other words, something that sounds very like the admissions of the USLA recruit above, about the masked ones in black whom the USLA were to capture in simulations! It is these who sound like the USLAC.

It is interesting to note here that despite the detailed descriptions by multiple soldiers at Targoviste during these days, attesting to gunfire against them, Prosecutor Dan Voinea—who was at the unit only for the period of the Ceausescu’s trial and execution—disputes not only that the Targoviste barracks was ever under attack, but, in his typical exaggerated, hyperbolic style goes on to tell an interviewer in November 2005: **“No. Nobody attacked any [!] unit in Romania....[and, of course] Not a single terrorist existed.”**¹⁰³

Finally, there is the ominous quote taken from an article immediately after the events by Army Major Mihai Floca in describing the actions of USLA personnel Gh. Grigoras, Mircea Zatreanu, Ion Stefanut, Ion Popescu, and Marin Vasile. Floca quotes one of the USLA as saying:

“The fact that some considered us terrorists isn’t accidental at all, notes the commander of the unit [presumably Grigoras]. Knowing that we were well trained, capable of annihilating them, the true/real terrorists acted in our name, and did everything to compromise us.”¹⁰⁴

This is an interesting admission, which, I believe, brings us closer to the USLAC and to the role USLA played. The question, of course, is: did it go beyond this? Was there more to it? What was the role of the USLA proper?

Questioning the Role of the USLA

British scholar Peter Siani-Davies has recently authored a wonderfully-written and insightful volume that is likely—and deserves—to become the “record of account” on the Romanian Revolution of December 1989. His volume is to be commended not only for its readability, but for—and I am far from the first to point this out—his seamless and easy-going incorporation of theories of collective violence and revolution with the narrative of the Revolution. Such a poignant marriage of social science theory and historical detail is rare in today’s social sciences, and Siani-Davies does a superb job in integrating the two. Moreover, in contrast to much that has been written on December 1989, Siani-Davies did not dabble: he performed in-depth and detailed research of Romanian sources. As the “powers-that-be”—from its ‘terminally vain’ to its ‘absentee monarch’—in Romanian, and East European, studies somehow have “overlooked” providing me with, and are unlikely to provide me with, the opportunity to play any role in reviewing Siani-Davies’ work, prior to or after publication, and some of his claims invoke my research directly and are pertinent to the argument here, I will address some of our key differences now.

Siani-Davies’ key passage concerning my research is the following:

“From the evidence so far available there is little to suggest that any of the larger securitate units per se came into open conflict with the forces of the revolution after the overthrow of Ceausescu, although the absence of detailed information makes it impossible to discount the possibility that some members of these or other securitate units, acting as individuals or small groups, did take up arms against the incoming regime. At first sight, some support for this view may be found in the ballistics evidence presented by Richard Hall, in which he stresses that during the revolution ammunition was fired which was not in possession of the army. Focusing particularly on 9mm machine guns of West German origin, which he says were only in the possession of USLA and the V Directorate, Hall points out that bullets of this caliber were found at various ‘hot spots’ during the revolution, and in the corpse of a student of the military academy who died defending the Ministry of Defense building on the night of December 22-23. However, it may be questioned whether this evidence is quite so conclusive proof of the existence of securitate terrorists as Hall suggests. As of March 1990, thirty-one of these guns from the arsenal of the V Directorate still remained unaccounted for and, given the circulation of guns during the revolution, it is by no means certain that it was troops from these units that fired the weapons in question. And, even if members of USLA and the V Directorate had been responsible for using these weapons, given the confusion at the time and the fact that some troops from these units were actively engaged in the fighting on the

behalf of the new authorities, it does not follow that they were used against the revolution."¹⁰⁵

There are a host of problems with this analysis—as we have already seen. In a 300 odd page book, this passage is pretty much the sole analysis of the ballistics evidence from December 1989, and, frankly, I venture to guess that the ballistics question would not have garnered any attention had he not been commenting on my findings. It is, of course, more than most accounts of the December events which have nothing to say at all about the ballistics evidence. I'll deal later with his allegations regarding the 9 mm Stecikin and Makarov guns he alludes to, but it is important to highlight that in the discussion of the ballistics' evidence he quotes from my dissertation, I spent two pages discussing the 9 mm, and three discussing the 5.6/vidia ammunition—and he makes no reference whatsoever to the latter.¹⁰⁶

How is it that Siani-Davies has nothing to say about the “five, five something” caliber ammunition, in particular those with “vidia” tip? My guess is that it does not fit into his focus on the official, registered arsenals of the units in question in December 1989. Yet, I believe that I have demonstrated abundantly above that these bullets were seemingly ubiquitous in the December 1989 events, despite their not having been “on the books” so-to-speak. The most important thing the distribution of these identical bullets across a wide geographical region shows is **pattern**—the exact kind of thing Siani-Davies wants to avoid because he realizes quite well the idea of isolated freelancers falls apart when you have people showing up using the same kind of weapons and bullets, and wearing the same kind of outfits (he also has nothing to say about the “combinezoane negre,” which as we saw appear in a host of far-flung cities)!¹⁰⁷

Nor do any of the admissions by former USLA/Securitate personnel that the USLA/USLAC were responsible for the “terrorism” show up in Siani-Davies' volume—1) (according to former USLA officer Marian Romanescu) USLA Commander Gheorghe Ardeleanu's admission about people found with USLA and USLAC identity cards “who had no right to have them in their possession;” 2) former Timisoara Securitate officer Roland Vasilevici's revelations, and 3) the allegations of an anonymous former USLA recruit.

Daniel Chirot's comments on the dust-jacket attesting to the quality and insight of Siani-Davies volume are well-merited, but how can he claim that the Siani-Davies account is “near definitive” when it completely ignores this critical evidence? Indeed, almost nothing of the evidence I have presented so far, shows up in Siani-Davies' otherwise excellent account: why? In a decision I cannot explain, Siani-Davies almost entirely avoided Romanian weeklies, including *Expres*, *Cuvintul*, *Baricada*, *Expres Magazin*, *Zig-Zag*, *NU!(Chuj)*, *Flacara*, *Tinerama*, *Orizont (Timisoara)*, *Europa*...and the list goes on. For the uninitiated in the dimensions of the historiography of the Revolution, such as the esteemed Professor Chirot, the importance of this literature is unapparent...and yet as my citations above demonstrate, it is critical.

From Where Would Such Suspicions of the USLA Come?

Siani-Davies expresses some bewilderment at the genesis of the “rumor” that the USLA were going to launch a counterattack on the afternoon of 22 December. He concludes that when Army General Nicolae Tudor pronounced it on the evening of 22 December, he was probably building on the panicked statements by TV reporter Teodor Brates and others early that afternoon that the “columns of the USLA were coming to massacre them.” But that does not explain where Brates and the others imported this idea from, or whether or not they concocted it themselves.

Angela Bacescu, the notorious cheerleader of the former Securitate, known for her endless interviewing of them in the pages of *Europa* since fall 1990, may have supplied us with one possible explanation to this. In late summer 1990, Bacescu, who, not surprisingly, denies the existence of any real “terrorists” and refers to them as “imaginary,” targeted Brates and a whole host of usual characters for this “lie,” but added someone else:

“Among those [who showed up at Television on the afternoon of 22 December after Ceausescu fled] was this Cirjan, an ordinary thief, who entered with a false ID. He had been thrown out of the USLA, several years earlier, because he was stealing from passengers’ baggage, was dealing on the black market, and other such things, and [here] he is from the first moment shouting ‘Death to the Securitate’ and ‘The USLA are coming to shoot us’.”¹⁰⁸

I won’t dwell on this here, but it seems significant that Bacescu centers upon a former USLA member as perhaps the initial source at TV for the fears that the USLA were going to attack. As a former USLA member might Cirjan have known of the role of the unit in a contingency plan for the overthrow of the regime? It is certainly plausible, in particular when one considers the revelations above by Securitate Colonel Gheorghe Dinu and the anonymous USLA recruit—both attesting to the combined/common training of antiterrorist and “terrorist” forces.

Moreover, even in the event that Bacescu was inventing this, what would make her believe/suspect/accuse a former USLA member as being responsible for the “rumor” that the USLA were going to launch a counterattack? An interesting hunch/accusation, no? This gives us an explanation to the question most people simply ignore when discussing the “suspicions” against the USLA beginning on 22 December: from where did they come? Why so specific? Cirjan would have had that one critical element to know: credible access to the information when he was in the unit.

The Hypothesis of “Freely Circulating Weapons”

As noted in Siani-Davies’ comments above, he proposes what seems the very reasonable proposition that since weapons allegedly circulated freely during the events, just because a weapon belonged to the USLA or Directorate V-a, it does not mean they necessarily

were the ones who used them. Nothing wrong with that supposition...until one starts looking at where the weapons ended up.

Weapons similar to those of Directorate V-a and the USLA could have shown up anywhere during the Revolution, in anybody's hands, but what is interesting is among whose hands they did show up. Official Army documents and recollections by Army participants in the early 1990s show that a citizen with a Libyan passport in his billfold shot in the CC building on the night of 22 December was found in possession of a 9 mm "Makarov" pistol...a pistol whose serial number was traced back to a V-a member who claimed that he had "thrown it away" earlier that afternoon.¹⁰⁹

Yes, of course, it is possible, but the Securitate seemed to have a history of "lending" or "losing" or "misplacing" weapons that just happened to show up in the hands of foreign terrorists. Notably, documents show that in 1981 on two occasions, Colonel Sergiu Nica of the Securitate, on the orders of his leadership, requested arms for "special missions"—including Walter, Makarov, and Stecikin [9 mm] pistols, AKM machine guns, and pusti semiautomate cu luneta [PSLs]—arms which apparently were delivered to and used by the infamous international terrorist, Carlos "The Jackal."¹¹⁰

The Incident Involving the Military Academy Students

Let us turn then to one of the incidents mentioned specifically by Siani-Davies in the passage above: the case of the students from Military Technical Academy.

Focusing particularly on 9mm machine guns of West German origin, which he says were only in the possession of USLA and the V Directorate, Hall points out that bullets of this caliber were found at various 'hot spots' during the revolution, and in the corpse of a student of the military academy who died defending the Ministry of Defense building on the night of December 22-23.... Even if members of USLA and the V Directorate had been responsible for using these weapons, given the confusion at the time and the fact that some troops from these units were actively engaged in the fighting on the behalf of the new authorities, it does not follow that they were used against the revolution. (p. 154)

Examining the specific case of the military academy students at the Defense Ministry on the night of 22-23 December, we can make the following observations. According to one of the commanders of the students who was at the scene: five students were killed in all, "four shot in the head, one in the chest," and eight were wounded.¹¹¹ The 9 mm bullet was removed on the morning of 23 December from the upper jaw of one of the students shot in the head; a commission from the military academy concluded that those shot were shot with guns with "a precise targeting system for nighttime use."¹¹²

There is one explanation suggested by Siani-Davies that we can probably eliminate pretty quickly in this particular case: the idea that this was an accidental shot by an USLA member fighting on behalf of the new authorities. The whole issue surrounding the

dispatch and clash of an USLA unit on the following night of 23-24 December 1989 at the Defense Ministry appears to have been determined by their absence in that area prior to that time: hence, they were ostensibly called upon to root out terrorists from the area because they had not been in the area until that time. There is no indication of an USLA unit in that area on the night of 22-23 December, and mixed units of Army and USLA personnel do not appear to have gone into action until after the morning of the 23rd, likely with the official TV and radio announcements by Securitate Director Vlad and Interior Minister Postelnicu ostensibly pledging their loyalty to the new political order.

Siani-Davies appears to overlook the contradiction between the passage cited above and an earlier quote from Army General Traian Dafinescu he invokes about “a massive attack” on the night of 22-23 December against the Defense Ministry by “terrorists” firing “from the tallest houses and apartment blocs” in the surrounding area (p. 98). It is important to quote from passages of the interview with Dafinescu that Siani-Davies did not include: Dafinescu goes on to note that the soldiers (from the military academy) who were killed were shot precisely, “being tracked evidently with ‘arme cu lunete’ (i.e. lunetisti)... **All the terrorists were wearing black outfits**, without any documents or identity cards on them. [emphasis added].”¹¹³

The head of the first parliamentary commission investigating the December events published in 1995 a list of the locations from which gunfire was opened upon the Defense Ministry from 22-27 December 1989. Here is part of that list:

*“...--from the rooftops of blocs C-2, C-4, and T-8 there was gunfire with PSLs and rifles, and from the right flank of blocs T-9 and on C-2 on some nights, there were signal lights shining toward neighboring blocs and toward the Defense Ministry building, followed next by the execution of gunfire, by terrorist elements, from different directions toward the Defense Ministry building; --from the terraces of blocs A-2 and A-4 on the night of 22.12.1989, there was PSL and machine gun fire. Also from B1. From A-2 there were signal lights followed by gunfire.”*¹¹⁴

One can get a sense here of the specificity involved in attempting to record and recreate the places from which there was terrorist gunfire—specifically, inhabited apartment blocs. Interviews conducted by Army journalists in May-June 1990 with residents of blocs A1, A2 and B3 make abundantly clear the terror residents felt beginning on this night of 22-23 December and in some cases their own personal encounters with or sighting of the terrorists (one resident described them as being dressed in some type of “salopete” “probably grey in color.”)¹¹⁵ Army Colonel Gheorghe Vaduva recounted that during these days,

*“...on the top floor [of the Defense Ministry], I found together with those I was with there, the remains of bullets and even some 9 mm caliber bullets. This caliber bullet was not at that time part of the Romanian Army’s arsenal. Stecikin and Makarov guns using this type of munition, were in the stockpile of some of the special forces of the Securitate and the Interior Ministry.”*¹¹⁶

Certainly, the image of an attack from surrounding buildings by unknown sources is enhanced by Securitate officers forced to give testimony immediately after the events. In early January 1990, “Cpt. Soare Ovidiu, [of Securitate] Directorate V-a, Services 4+5, resident of Bucharest, Mendeleev Street,” presumably under questioning, spoke about those he had seen killed as “terrorists”:

“Defense Ministry Headquarters [M.Ap.N.], 22/23.12.1989

*On the night of 22/23 December 1989, being located in the Defense Ministry Headquarters, around 22:00, a forceful attack began upon the building from the ‘Orizont’ Complex and from the blocs to the left and right of it. Based on the manner in which they acted and how the victims from among the soldiers who were defending the building appeared (shot in the head or in the area of the head), **everybody concluded that they were shot by guns with infrared night scopes** [emphasis added]....The attack upon MapN Headquarters was unleashed with fanaticism, one of the attackers jumped a wall armed with a knife, he was shot, and in the morning I saw him from a distance of about 5-6 meters and I could conclude that he appeared Arab (olive-skinned, black hair and mustache). It was said he had no documents upon his person....”¹¹⁷*

Lt. Mr. Apostol M. Anton, Service 1: “On 29 December 1989 he learned from his neighbor Pipoi Remus, who lives on the second floor, beneath his apartment, that he saw many people shooting toward the Defense Ministry, whom he was convinced were not Romanian. They appeared to him to be Arab. They were shooting with small automatic guns.”¹¹⁸

According to the military’s semi-official account of the December events, at 2130 on 22 December gunfire was opened on the Defense Ministry from the direction of “the Orizont, Favorit, and Ghencea.”¹¹⁹ Here is the description of Lt. Marius Mitrofan of the Military Technical Academy of what happened when they arrived at the Defense Ministry on that night:

“Our buses stopped on the service road in front of the A1 and B3 blocs. The first students had hardly gotten off the buses when from the area of the Agency for Foreign Trade [a building that would likely have been controlled by the Securitate] gunfire was opened upon us. Simultaneously, terrorists located in these three blocs also began to fire on us. Colleagues who had already gotten off [the buses] responded with a flurry of bullets against the terrorists on the upper floors of these blocs. I was in the third of these buses and we got off last; the gunfire was reaching maximum intensity. Two leaps later I was behind a tree from where I could see the results of the bullets from [bloc] B3. My colleague in front of me had fallen, I pulled myself toward him: he was shot in the head. Honestly, I was filled with horror: I had seen death! The next moment a colleague fell behind me, also shot in the head! Diabolical precision—proof that we weren’t squaring off with just some amateurs, but with professional killers. In

the morning, we realized how many had fallen from our ranks: five dead—four shot in the head, one in the chest—eight wounded. Who were the killers? ... Why has nothing been done to find and punish them?”¹²⁰

Let us end here as Floca and Stoica do, with an expression of anguish in June 1990 that nothing was seemingly being done to find the culprits of December 1989:

“Let us also note that, on the morning of the 23rd, a 9 mm caliber bullet—unknown until then by military cadre—was removed from a student. The bullet was well-placed. Strange, very strange but, until now, no one has been interested in it [the bullet]. Perhaps from this day forward...”

Evidence Other Securitate Personnel Themselves Suspected the USLA/C at the Time

We have a written record from Securitate officials that they were asked while the violence was taking place to hand over the details of their safehouses...but refused. From USLA Commander General Ardeleanu’s report, dated 8 January 1990:

“General Bucurescu Giani communicated on 23 December ’89 that the members of the special unit for antiterrorist warfare would be assembled in buses and brought to a field near Ghencea to fall out in formation. The same general ordered that a list of all safehouses of the unit be forwarded to deputy of the Counterintelligence Directorate [Directorate IV-a] Colonel Balasoiu, who was on the secure line at MI 199 belonging to the head of the Disinformation Service—Colonel Tatu—where all means were being taken to form a verification unit. This detail was analyzed and the USLA Commander [i.e. Ardeleanu himself] ordered that this list of safehouses not be forwarded, instead to be forwarded, at the appropriate time, to the Defense Ministry to whom we were subordinated.”¹²¹

Why would the Deputy Director of the Securitate, General Bucurescu ask that USLA personnel fall-out for inspection at Ghencea stadium, the stadium of the Army soccer team? Securitate apologists and others will suggest they were to be killed, because they were being set up by those who seized power to be killed and then cynically presented to the public as “terrorists.” A more plausible explanation is that senior Securitate leaders who had abandoned Ceausescu themselves suspected the whereabouts of USLA personnel and their relationship to the terrorism—why else take the risky step of trying to assemble the whole unit in the same place? As would be expected, precise information concerning the USLA, its facilities (including safehouses), and activities, appears to have been heavily-compartmentalized within the Securitate itself—characteristic of many state security and intelligence organizations, but especially within a totalitarian and sultanist state like that of Nicolae Ceausescu.

The revelations of USLA Major Marian Romanescu—who claims he attempted to turn himself in multiple times during the events to avoid having to execute orders he did not agree with [!]¹²²—enhance the idea that even the Securitate itself was suspecting the USLA. Romanescu’s comments also highlight the standard use of multiple, false identity cards during the events:

*“[During the night of 22 December 1989]...Utilizing the cover IDs that we had in our possession I easily passed through the check-point set up by revolutionaries on the way from Baneasa airport....I presented myself at another object of national economic importance (the M.T.Tc), and asked for the protection of the Army. I am interrogated, questioned by officer F.I., himself an officer of the DSS (Directorate IV-a [i.e. Military Counterintelligence]) but which had long since crossed over to the Revolution. **I am asked to conform to certain rules imposed by the situation and not to transmit signals or other messages to the elements that had opened fire on the object, the unit of which I was a member being taken into account [!]**” (emphasis added)¹²²*

“Defense Ministry Incident” Redux: the USLA on 23/24 December 1989

What we know is that this requested “fall-out” of USLA cadre never took place. We also know from the mouth (Romanian Television, 1991) and hand (a directed report dated 8 January 1990) of USLA Commander Gheorghe Ardeleanu himself that, on that evening of 23 December 1989, Army General Ion Hortopan broke into a meeting of Ardeleanu with generals and other officials of the Front leadership and announced that “**Near a military objective, on the outskirts of the capital, that was being fired upon, an armed Plutonier Major Popa Ion Stefan from the USLA was captured.**”¹²³ Clearly, it would appear, based on this, that this USLA member was not part of some team dispatched in the “defense of the Revolution.” According to Mihai Floca writing in August 1990, the objective in question outside the capital was the CITc (?), the USLA member claimed he was coming to the military unit to “surrender,” and Ardeleanu, “upon receiving the news played dumb, [saying] ‘I think it is [USLA] Chief of Staff Trosca’s doing, he did this to me’.”¹²⁴

Floca and others have maintained that at this point, late on the night of 23 December 1989, while at the Defense Ministry, General Militaru called upon Ardeleanu to bring the entire personnel of the USLA (757 officers and ncos) to the Defense Ministry to root out the “terrorists” who were firing upon it. As “30 were on guard at [various] embassies, and 80 had been dispatched to Sibiu with a Rombac [aircraft] from 20 December 1989 upon ‘orders from on-high’,” this left 647. Of these, Militaru supposedly wanted 600 to report. Instead, only 18 came in 3 ABIs.¹²⁵

It has always seemed unusual, and this has been highlighted by others, in the serious situation that prevailed on the night of 23-24 December 1989, that in order to clear these blocs of “terrorists,” the units that came were led by the Chief of Staff Gheorghe Trosca. Why send your leadership out to do this job?

The Securitate apologists and conspiratorialists have, of course, sought to suggest that General Nicolae Militaru nominated them because precisely these individuals had surveilled him for alleged links to Soviet intelligence. But, as I have written elsewhere, Ardeleanu himself, upends all of this when he freely admits that it was he who selected Trosca for this mission.¹²⁶ It, of course, seems to make a lot sense when one considers his apparent attempt to lay what was happening at the feet of Trosca. That he ordered Trosca and the others to the scene, under absurd circumstances, and they ended up getting killed, appears to be something for which many former USLA personnel—some of whom appear to have genuinely resented the boorish and vindictive Ardeleanu for his slavish behavior toward Elena Ceausescu and Tudor Postelnicu—were never able to forgive Ardeleanu.

I won't tax the patience of my readers with another rehash here of what happened when two of three USLA ABIs arrived out front of M.Ap.N. headquarters (Defense Ministry). I have previously discussed it extensively elsewhere.¹²⁷ It is important to note, however, that the USLA officers who survived the incident admit that they were beaten up, interrogated about the makeup and duties of their unit, and forced to take urinalysis tests to determine if they were drugged—all things which suggest they were hardly considered the innocent victims of an unfortunate accident at the time it occurred. Army officers involved in the confrontation who were interviewed in spring 1990 maintained that they witnessed gunfire from the guns on the USLA vehicles, three of the machine guns recovered from the USLA vehicles showed signs of having been fired, the gun barrel of one the tanks had been blocked, and on the top of another tank a machine gun and signal lantern were found.¹²⁸ These officers then claimed that after their recollections were published in June 1990, they were “warned to think long and hard since they have families and to stay on their own turf if they do not want to have problems.”¹²⁹

Residents of the apartment blocs surrounding the Defense Ministry also claimed harassment and intimidation. One family maintained that they had been visited in May 1990 by two individuals flashing “Militia” identity cards, inquiring what had happened in December 1989 in that location, and insisting that different parts of the Army had merely fired at one another—there had been no “terrorists.” Another resident who requested anonymity since he had “had enough problems in the past with the Securitate” said he was visited on 21 May by a “police major who called himself Popescu [a common Romanian last name, commonly used as a cover by Securitate personnel]” and wanted to talk about the “terrorists,” but that the resident should not inform the Army of his visit. Some residents maintained that a neighbor suspected of being a Securitate collaborator had been going around suggesting “how to ‘correctly’ interpret the incident with the two armored personnel vehicles [i.e. the USLA unit] on the night of 23/24 December.” The Army journalists concluded in June 1990 based on these interviews that “therefore, ‘the boys’ [a common euphemism for the Securitate] are [still] at work.”¹³⁰ It has been particularly frustrating that neither Siani-Davies nor Dennis Deletant—both of whom have written on this key episode—has apparently ever taken the time to read the disclosures in *Armata Poporului*, and hence completely ignore the descriptions of what happened and claims of harassment and intimidation of citizens from these blocs.

Mihai Floca's credibility on the issue of what happened on the night of 23-24 December with the USLA units at the Defense Ministry, what happened on the other nights of the period of the Revolution in the same location, and on the claims of residents of these blocs—as noted, witness accounts that other publications simply ignored—is enhanced by the fact that his articles from late December 1989 through 1990 clearly do not show someone out “to get” the USLA or tarnish their reputation.

What is particularly notable is that after writing the (in)famous 26 December 1989 *Romania Libera* article (“Ucigasii de meserie al teroristului nr. 1,” p. 3) claiming that these USLA personnel in the Defense Ministry incident were “terrorists,” Floca wrote articles demonstrating how the USLA collaborated with the Army in certain actions during December 1989, at the CC building (“Actiune concertata impotriva pericolului,” *Romania Libera* 29 December 1989, p. 4) and at the Television Station (“Reportaj la U.S.L.A.,” *Tineretul Liber*, 5 January 1990, p.4). Only in June 1990, did he begin publishing interviews with the Army soldiers involved in the 23-24 December incident with the USLA at the Defense Ministry and with the residents of the surrounding blocs. These articles were as he noted prompted by two developments: the articles in the opposition publication *Zig-Zag* rehabilitating the USLA and claiming they were innocent victims in the Defense Ministry incident (authored by the Securitate's number one cheerleader, Angela Bacescu), and articles in the French press arguing that the “terrorists” had not existed. It was thus not as Siani-Davies suggests a response prompted first by a letter from the widows of the dead USLA officers.¹³¹

Other “Misunderstandings” Involving the USLA

Nor, of course, were confrontations such as this one at the Defense Ministry “accidental” elsewhere. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact time the decision was taken to send out mixed teams of Army and USLA personnel—in part, it would seem, in conformity with the so-called “planul unic de actiune” (single or special action plan)—it appears they became operational only on the 23rd, perhaps after the overnight/early morning Television and Radio announcements by Interior Minister Postelnicu and Securitate Director Vlad ostensibly declaring their loyalty to the Revolution and calling on all units under their commands to follow their lead.¹³² Certainly, we know that on this day, Saturday the 23rd, they were sent out in Bucharest, Buzau, Arad, and it appears other large cities. Thus, it seems clear that the “suspicions” or “fears” expressed by (Cirjan), Brates, General Nicolae Tudor, and others on Television on the 22nd were being ignored or at least not taken into account (certainly something that damages the idea that among those who had seized power everyone was working off the same sheet of music and everything was (pre-)coordinated.)

Yet, in place after place where the USLA showed up there were to be “misunderstandings” and problems. In Arad, Major Suciuc of the USLA, who had been sent out on 23 December to help with the arrest of Militia Generals Nuta and Mihalea and the others who were shooting (“terrorists”) from the “Hotel Parc”—an unsuccessful mission—was arrested at noon on 24 December along with other Interior Ministry

people, including USLA, probably in relation to an “accidental” confrontation involving an ABI.¹³³

According to the Army’s semi-official account of the December events, in the area of the Cernica and Pustnicu forests and the Brick Factory in Bucharest (apparently in the vicinity of vilas of Postelnicu and Valentin Ceausescu), a tank unit under the command of Captain Ion Anghel “engaged in battle with terrorist elements that were on foot and in ABIs,” the latter being a vehicle exclusively belonging to the USLA, as was noted earlier.¹³⁴ In Sibiu, Lt. Col. Dragomir reported that two ABIs posted in front of the Militia Inspectorate and across from the military school which came under attack “had their machine guns pointed at the school, while the gun barrels exhibited signs of having been freshly fired.”¹³⁵ In Resita, “a group of three officers from the USLA were seen exiting the DSS [Securitate] building and after a consultation with a group of 5 individuals they entered a zone where gunfire erupted. They returned after the gunfire ceased.”¹³⁶ These three were arrested upon the orders of Army Col. Todor Stepan.

And, of course, the USLA just happened to be arrested by accident as terrorists. Somewhat cryptically DIA officer Remus Ghergulescu recounts:

“On the night of 24 December, the commander of the Central Military Hospital told me that they had two terrorists tied to their beds. One had a strain, and the other a sprained shoulder. They were in fact from the USLA and had participated at a demonstration [!]. At the ministry, ‘the terrorists’ were brought into the bathroom and investigations were conducted there. In this case I saw that they were USLAS-si junior officers.”¹³⁷

In Galati, matters also deteriorated on the 24th: “On 24 December...at 7 PM, the actor Vlad Vasiliu appeared in the balcony and announced to the crowd that: ‘We have traitors among us, [the] U.S.L.A. and [former Party first-secretary] Carol Dina have tried to launch a coup.’”¹³⁸ This, of course, sounds similar to what happened in Craiova where, as we saw earlier in the discussion about vidia bullets, USLA officer Dinel Staicu related that he attempted to ‘infiltrate his boss, Mr. Sandu’ into the prefecture, and found himself placed under house arrest.

Perhaps the most eloquent example of USLA duplicity comes from the actor Ernst Maftei in reference to the USLA personnel who came on the night of 23-24 December to the CC building to “help” civilians and the Army face the “terrorists”:

Dan Badea (the reporter, DB): Who was it Dan Iosif [a civilian who was to become a key member and defender of Iliescu’s circle from the December events onward] shot?

EM (Ernest Maftei): USLA! Sir, they ostensibly came to help us and instead they ended up shooting us!...In the sub-basement there were some men of ours, because there were some armored doors there and we didn’t know what the deal was with them. And someone opened a door and saw lights on. So we got scared

about what was there. Then the USLA came to help us. Yes! And when they went down, they shot all our people. Two of ours were killed there, they were revolutionaries, simple people who went there to die [as it turned out]. And then we realized that these guys would kill us. Then they ascended. They too had three dead. And so we surrounded them: “Undress we told them!” My god, it was awful.

DB: Dan Iosif claims that he didn't shoot the 15 USLASI...

*EM: He's having you on, don't listen to him! It was necessary to kill them there. But he doesn't want to say it because he doesn't want it to be known because today the Securitate still rules. Precisely some of those who shot at us are now in power. Listen to me. **The USLA, the Fifth Column, were with Ceausescu** [emphasis added]. You don't think they would have killed us? My god!*

DB: Who else besides Dan Iosif shot?

EM: Many, about 5, I don't know their names. Hell, if we hadn't shot them, we would have been dead! It was revolution, sir. It was civil war...¹³⁹

Finally, the description of “dead terrorists” at the main Bucharest morgue, in a report dated 26 December 1989 (reproduced in the weekly *Tinerama* in 1993), seems to have clear signs pointing to the Securitate, especially the USLA and Fifth Directorate:

Dead Terrorists. *Although their existence is vehemently denied by all official institutions, we are able to prove that they existed and have sufficient details to identify them.... We continue with some excerpts of the declaration of Ion Lungu, head of the group of fighters who guarded the ‘Institute of Legal Medicine’ [IML, the main Bucharest morgue], beginning from the evening of 22 December 1989: “Starting from the 23rd, there were brought, in succession, more ‘special’ corpses. They were brought only by military vehicles and were accompanied by officers. They were all dressed the same: kaki uniforms, with or without military insignia, fur-lined boots, cotton underwear. All the clothes were new. The established procedure at that point was that when the bodies were unloaded from the trucks, at the ramp to the back of the IML, to be disrobed and inspected. The documents found were released to Prosecutor Vasiliu and criminology officers. The weapons and munitions we found and surrendered—on the basis of a verbal procedure—to the officer on duty from UM 01046. Weapons and ammunition were found only on those ‘special’ corpses. Those who brought them said that they were terrorists. I turned over to this military unit five pistols (three Stecikin and two Makarov—all 9 mm caliber), two commando daggers and hundreds of 9 mm and 7.62 mm cartridges (compatible with the AKM machine gun). They were held separately from the other corpses, in a room—I believe that it used to be the coatroom—with a guard at the door. ...*

Access to the room with the terrorists was strictly forbidden. Only Prosecutor Vasiliu, criminologist officers, Dr. Belis, and the chief of autopsies could enter. On top of them, next to the arms, there were personal documents, passports (some blank), all types of identity cards—one of them was clearly false, it stated that the dead terrorist was the director at Laromet (at that plant no director died)—identity cards that were brand new, different service stamps in white. All had been shot by rifles (one was severed in two) and showed evidence of gunshots of large caliber. Some had tattoos (they had vultures on their chests), were young (around 30 years old), and were solidly built. I believe that their identity was known, since otherwise I can't explain why their photographs were attached to those of unidentified corpses. They were brought to us in a single truck. In all, there were around 30 dead terrorists. [The document is signed by Ion Lungu and Dumitru Refenschi on 26 December 1989]”¹⁴⁰

As of December 1989, officially only the USLA and Directorate V-a possessed Stecikin and Makarov weapons in their arsenals.

Orwellian Sanity

Prosecutor Voinea’s campaign to “sanitize” the Revolution—to simplify the story to make it more “sane” and digestible for the outsider...by cleansing it of the “terrorists”—has generally succeeded to date. Of course, the credit is hardly his alone: he has had almost seventeen years of word-of-mouth, print, broadcast, and electronic revisionism to help him out, and he has, as we saw in the introduction, repeated the same accusations almost like clockwork upon the anniversary of the Revolution for the past decade.

But my use of the term “Orwellian” in the title of this paper is not only designed to capture Voinea’s uncanny ability to make definitive statements that are demonstrably wrong, to argue that black is white and white is black—from his denial of the use of gunfire simulators in December 1989, to his claim that the only “lunetisti” who acted after 22 December were from the Army, to his denial of the existence of weapons and (especially “vidia”) bullets not in the arsenal of the Army, to his denial of the existence of “terrorists,” to his denial that any military unit was attacked during the events, to his denial of the role of foreigners in the events....

I use the term “Orwellian” here as much to describe the ease with which he has gotten and gets away with errors, misunderstandings, and falsehoods that could easily be challenged, if not combated by his interlocutors in the Romanian media and intelligentsia. For it is the fact that he has been able and is able to get away with all this that is truly “Orwellian” and that is indeed a tragedy for Romania’s citizens. The tragedy is thus less the predictable “supply side” of the post-authoritarian lie, than the enthusiastic consumption and appetite for it. This is why I believe, accurately I would argue, that “December 1989” long ago became more about post-Ceausescu Romania than about what happened in December 1989.

Still, there are those who will respond to the information presented here—in part, in tacit admission that it is pretty hard to challenge what I have presented here—with the argument that Prosecutor Voinea is doing his best, that he has done and is doing more than his predecessors, that at least those senior Army officers who were responsible for the repression of demonstrators in Timisoara, Bucharest, and elsewhere before the Ceausescu's flight on 22 December 1989 will finally be brought to account. Indeed, I don't discount that in the trials of Stanculescu, Chitac, and others this can and will perhaps happen—but even then as I will show below, this will be *partial* justice for those events, as key elements of the context (including other guilty parties) will remain expunged from the story, and there is likely a heavy element of post-December 1989 political and personal payback in their trials and sentences.

Moreover, I should add, I do not necessarily doubt Prosecutor Voinea when he says that there is no “juridical basis” or that his investigations have not revealed the existence of “terrorists” in December 1989. As multiple quotes above should make clear, already in 1990 and 1991, maps of Securitate safehouses, bullets, weapons, and video entered as evidence in files on the Revolution had disappeared or been lost. And, of course, the question of investigations is a tricky one: someone who lived their formative years and much of their adult life in a totalitarian regime such as Ceausescu's communist Romania knows well the questions **not** to ask, the places where **not** to look, the people **not** to interview. A military prosecutor since 1982, Voinea likely knows that doubly-well. Certainly, the wealth of detail provided above suggests that Voinea has hardly turned up every stone in searching for the truth.

Others may respond with an understandable question: how could so many people have gotten things so wrong? This is the numbers game and it is powerful where as we saw earlier already a decade after the events 90% of those polled rejected “the lie with the terrorists.” I will demonstrate that it is indeed possible, by showing the about-face that occurred in the media regarding the role of the USLA in the repression prior to 22 December 1989. One could argue that this change in treatment of this question does not necessarily have implications for the treatment of the “terrorist” question after 22 December, and the role of the USLA. In all probability it does have implications, however, and it is unlikely that it was just happenstance that the unit involved in this change in understanding was precisely the USLA. Certainly, one would have hoped that a realization that they had gotten things so wrong with the USLA before 22 December would have translated into a more skeptical and critical reassessment of USLA actions after 22 December, but that did not—and has not—happened.

One of the interesting and unexpected elements of Romulus Cristea's late 2005-early 2006 *Romania Libera* series on the Revolution, is what it communicates—mainly through the selected quotations of participants in the events—about the role of the USLA prior to Ceausescu's flight from power on 22 December, namely their direct involvement in repression, particularly in University Square in Bucharest on the night of 21-22 December 1989. For example, the title of Cristea's article in the 22 March 2006 (online)

edition of *Romania Libera* could not be more direct: “The Militia and the USLA tortured demonstrators.”

Readers unfamiliar with the Romanian press of the early 1990s might be surprised to learn that what Cristea reports almost prosaically—as if it were uncontroversial—was vigorously and repeatedly contested back then...but perhaps nowhere more so than in the pages of the same *Romania Libera* daily. After the then freshly-appointed Defense Minister, Victor Athanasie Stanculescu, had declared in late February 1990 that not only had the USLA not had any connection to the post-22 December “terrorism” but that they had not been involved in the repression of demonstrators in Timisoara, Bucharest, or elsewhere during the week preceding the 22nd¹⁴¹, Petre Mihai Bacanu had gone out of his way to assure readers of his series on the demonstrations in University Square in Bucharest on the night of 21-22 December 1989, that “We must clarify that the USLA detachments did not fire a single shot, nor arrest a single person among the columns of demonstrators” (16 March 1990), and “...we have incontrovertible proof that the USLA officers had only one mission, to defend the American Embassy and the El Al Israel Airlines ticket office” (17 March 1990).

Won’t Get Fooled Again...

Unintentionally indicative of the coverage of the USLA’s pre-22nd role that has predominated since February 1990 is that when it comes to the role of the USLA in Bucharest from the afternoon of 21 December to the early morning hours of 22 December 1989, Siani-Davies chooses to shunt this issue to a footnote and suddenly whereas the issue for other forces is the role they played, for the USLA it is the role they “*may* have played [emphasis added].”¹⁴² According to Siani-Davies, Horia Alexandrescu’s March 1990 “Heroes in Action” series in *Tineretul Liber*, “undoubtedly painted a rosy picture of the [USLA] unit, [but] they do seem to hold a kernel of truth.”¹⁴³ To say that this is a charitable interpretation of Alexandrescu’s articles is to say the least: it certainly places the bar incredibly low. A “kernel of truth”...yes, but on a cob or core of falsehood.

Alexandrescu denies **any** responsibility by the USLA for either repression of demonstrators before 22 December or the terrorism after! Alexandrescu’s comments are just plain weird at points: “Without pusti cu lunete, without vidia bullets, without sophisticated simulators,” he says the USLA operated in December.¹⁴⁴ If they didn’t have these things, then why mention them, and why be so specific? But as we have seen, specifically, with the revelations of USLA officer Alexandru Cristescu earlier in the discussion of “lunetisti,” the USLA clearly did have these PSLs and were posted with them on rooftops at least on 21 December. Moreover, to raise the issues of vidia bullets and sophisticated simulators is to almost admit their presence in December—which as we have seen was the case. Finally, as we have seen, somehow out of nowhere, the otherwise bizarre interest in the fate of a TAROM flight to Warsaw in late January 1990, filled with Libyans, found its way into Alexandrescu’s series on his USLA “Heroes in Action.”

Alexandrescu, it should be noted, was not the first journalist to whitewash the role of the USLA in December 1989. That distinction goes, it appears, to Octavian Andronic, senior editor of *Libertatea* who wrote on 6 January 1990 that, “The USLA was one of the first units belonging to the Interior Ministry that declined **any participation** in the repressive actions against demonstrators on 21 and 22 December [emphasis added].”¹⁴⁵ Like Alexandrescu, who had been editor of the chief sports daily in the late Ceausescu era, Andronic had been editor of *Libertatea*’s immediate Ceausist predecessor, *Informatia Bucurestiului*—in other words, intimately and almost unavoidably entangled in the politics and the blind spots of the old regime. The difference when Alexandrescu was writing was that, as he notes in his article introducing the series, after two months of suspicions, the new Defense Minister Stanculescu had, as one of his first acts in late February 1990 “lifted the haze that had enveloped” the unit during the interim.

Timisoara, Iasi, and Cluj, 14-21 December 1989

To support his argument, in the “Heroes in Action” series Alexandrescu wrote that Colonel Popescu, “director of the USLA service in Timisoara” had four times refused to obey orders to engage in repressive actions against the demonstrators. In point of fact, in accordance with Order No. 2600 Colonel Ion Popescu as head of the General Inspectorate of the Militia had ordered into action the “intervention platoon” (that included USLA personnel) that violently dispersed protesters from Piata Maria on the evening of 16 December 1989 in Timisoara.¹⁴⁶ Vasilevici and the anonymous USLA recruit quoted earlier have both maintained the USLA played a repressive role in Timisoara, with the latter claiming directly they opened fire.¹⁴⁷ Weapons inspections immediately after December 1989 revealed that the USLA had been armed and had indeed fired their weapons:

“The witness Constantin Gheorghe, former junior officer in the Timis USLA Service, declares that, on the afternoon of 17.12.1989, upon the order of Lt. Col. Atudoroaie Gheorghe (editor’s note: deputy of the Timis County Securitate), 43 machine guns and ammunition were distributed, some to USLA cadre and others to Securitate cadre who reported. The witness specifies that he distributed arms and ammunition without any documentation and that when he ran out of arms from the stockade, he sent some other personnel to...The witness M.M. Pantea Ambrozie, supervisor of the Militia Inspectorate’s armory, who acknowledged that he signed out 272 machine guns and ammunition...Upon examining the table drawn up by M.M. Pantea Ambrozie, it follows that the first to be armed were 114 officers and junior officers of the Securitate, out of which 29 were from the USLA....It is worth mentioning in this regard that a part of the Securitate personnel repeatedly collected new ammunition, for example Captain Bratosin Tudor from Service I, Lt. Dragomir Florin PCTF, and Lt. Iaru Florin and Plutonier Timbula-Cojocar Gheorghe, both from the USLA Service. And, not accidentally, upon the investigation of mixed Defense and Interior Ministry teams, it was established that the arms of these personnel showed gunpowder marks, denoting the fact that these had been fired (see the exchange

S.201/12.01/1990 copied in the charges). Moreover, gunpowder marks were found on the weapons of 28 Securitate cadre.”¹⁴⁸

Does this sound like the USLA in Timisoara were “reluctant to intervene?” Did Horia Alexandrescu, barely two and a half months after the Revolution, just “happen” to give Colonel Popescu and the USLA in Timisoara the benefit of the doubt?

Nor was it, of course, simply “incidental” that the USLA were included among the forces of “crowd control” and repression. The abortive 14 December 1989 demonstration in Iasi, saw in the words of Dan Emilian Stoica, “the city fill up with *securisti* and policemen to which was added an USLA company.”¹⁴⁹ In 2001, the deputy Militia chief for Cluj county, Vasile Pinteia, admitted at a trial concerning the killing of demonstrators on 21 December 1989 in Cluj, that “...amid the street clashes in Piata Libertatii a special antiterrorist brigade of the Securitate was dispatched, although he didn’t specify if the soldiers from this platoon used their weapons.”¹⁵⁰ This then led the former commander of “Brigade 60” of the Securitate, Vasile Mihalache, who had moments earlier affirmed that the only people to fire in demonstrators in Cluj in December 1989 had been soldiers of the Defense Ministry, to suddenly recall that “...indeed, among the soldiers there had been these Securitate men, who were dressed in uniforms similar to those of the Defense Ministry cadre, although he denied they shot demonstrators.”

So, in other words, both General Stanculescu and Horia Alexandrescu were “incorrect” when they denied any repressive role for the USLA during the week of 16-22 December 1989. Forgive me, but this seems a little more than just a “rosy” picture.

Sibiu, 19-22 December 1989

In Sibiu, Siani-Davies tells us:

Controversy also continues to surround a commercial TAROM flight, which is alleged to have brought up to eighty USLA troops from Bucharest to Sibiu on December 20, 1989. It is not clear if the USLA forces were actually on the airplane, or, even if they were, what they actually did in Sibiu...[Serban] Sandulescu (c1996), 57-58...suggests they were not members of USLA but the DIA [Army’s Intelligence Unit].¹⁵¹

From the standpoint of Siani-Davies’ unsuspecting reader such a conclusion may seem not only credible, but judicious. But one of Siani-Davies’ habits—identified negatively by even those who praise the book—is his tendency to draw negative equivalencies: i.e. there is about as much evidence to support x as there is to support y, in order to disprove or discount both propositions. In a review, Doris Mironescu writes:

“Very common are claims such as the following: ‘Finding the proof to sustain such an explanation of the events [that the Army’s Intelligence arm, the DIA simulated the “terrorist diversion,” to permit the Front’s takeover and a possible

Warsaw Pact invasion of the country] is as difficult as proving that special units of the securitate took up arms against the revolution' (p. 154). Mutually contradictory hypotheses are invoked in order to negate each other, not so much because of the weight of the claims, but through the ideological similarity of both."¹⁵²

This tendency definitely affects Siani-Davies' analysis of the "terrorists" and its accuracy. To begin with, in the very book (Sandulescu) invoked by Siani-Davies, the head of the DIA (Battalion 404 Buzau), Rear Admiral Stefan Dinu, is quoted as having told the Gabrielescu commission investigating the December events (of which Sandulescu was a member) that "we hardly had 80 fighters in this battalion."¹⁵³ It is known that 41 of them were in Timisoara from the morning of 18 December and only returned to their home base in Buzau on 22 December.¹⁵⁴ This makes it highly unlikely that they were on the 20 December TAROM flight to Sibiu that is in question.¹⁵⁵

Contrast this with the signs that exist pointing to the mystery passengers as having been from the Securitate/Interior Ministry, in particular the USLA. Nicu Silvestru, chief of the Sibiu County Militia, admitted in passing in a letter from prison that on the afternoon of 19 December 1989, in a crisis meeting, Nicolae Ceausescu's son, Nicu, party head of Sibiu County, announced that he was going to "call [his] specialists from Bucharest" to take care of any protests.¹⁵⁶ Ceausescu's Interior Minister, Tudor Postelnicu, admitted at his trial in January 1990 that Nicu had called him requesting "some troops" and he had informed Securitate Director General Iulian Vlad of the request.¹⁵⁷ If they were, indeed, DIA personnel, why would Nicu have called Postelnicu, and Postelnicu informed Vlad of the request—would such a request not have been relayed through the Defense Minister?

The first two military prosecutors for Sibiu, Anton Socaciu and Marian Valer, identified the passengers as USLA. Even Nicu Ceausescu admits that this was the accusation when he stated in August 1990:

*"...[T]he Military Prosecutor gave me two variants. In the first part of the inquest, they [the flight's passengers] were from the Interior Ministry. Later, however, in the second half of the investigation, when the USLA and those from the Interior Ministry began, so-to-speak, to pass 'into the shadows,' – after which one no longer heard anything of them – they [the passengers] turned out to be simple citizens..."*¹⁵⁸

Beginning, at least as early as August 1990, with the allusions of Major Mihai Floca, and later seemingly indirectly confirmed by former USLA officer Marian Romanescu, it was suggested that when USLA Commander Ardeleanu was confronted at the Defense Ministry on the night of 23/24 December 1989, Ardeleanu reportedly admitted that "30 were on guard at [various] embassies, and 80 had been dispatched to Sibiu with a Rombac [aircraft] from 20 December 1989 upon 'orders from on-high'."¹⁵⁹ Finally, and along these lines, we bring things full circle—and recall our "phantoms in black" again in the process—with the testimony of Army officer Hortopan to the same Serban Sandulescu at the Gabrielescu Commission hearings:

*Sandulescu: About those dressed in **black jumpsuits** do you know anything, do you have any information about whom they belonged to?*

*Hortopan: On the contrary. These were the 80 *uslasi* sent by the MI [Interior Ministry], by General Vlad and Postelnicu to guard Nicolae Ceausescu [i.e. Nicu]. I make this claim because Colonel Ardelean[u] in front of General Militaru, and he probably told you about this problem, at which I was present when he reported, when General Militaru asked him how many men he had in total and how many were now present, where each of them was: out of which he said that 80 were in Sibiu based on an order from his commanders. Thus, it is natural that these are who they were.¹⁶⁰*

Bringing us up to the morning of 22 December 1989, and setting the stage for what was to come, Lt. Col. Aurel Dragomir told the Army daily in November 1990:

Dragomir: Events began to develop quickly on 22 December. In the morning some of the students posted in different parts of the town began to observe some suspect individuals in black jumpsuits on the roofs in the lights of the attics of several buildings.

Reporter: The same equipment as the USLasi killed out front of the Defense Ministry...

Dragomir: And on the roof of the Militia building there were three or four similar individuals...¹⁶¹

Of course, the fact that these individuals were posted on the top of the Militia building on this morning, speaks volumes in itself about their affiliation. Indeed, in a written statement dated 28 January 1990, Ioan Scarlatescu, (Dir. Comm. Jud. Sibiu), admitted that he was asked by the Army on that morning if the unknown individuals “could be from the USLA?”¹⁶²

Bucharest and Tirgoviste, 21-22 December 1989

As for the events in Bucharest on 21-22 December 1989—the events about which Siani-Davies refers to the role the USLA *may* have played—Romulus Cristea appears to have finally clarified the source of a transcript of communications among the Securitate, Militia, and senior political figures on the afternoon and evening of 21 December 1989 and from the morning of 22 December. According to Cristea, the intercepts and transcripts were made on the personal initiative of some of the radiotelegraph operators and others employees of the Central Control [Office] of Radio[tele]communications at Strada Oltenitei no. 103 “at great risk to themselves, as recording the frequencies of the Securitate and Militie was illegal.”¹⁶³ That explains in part the incomplete nature of the transcripts—in particular, the gap of key hours in the middle of the night when regime

forces opened fire on the demonstrators in University Square and brutally carted those who weren't killed off to jail (48 people were killed, 604 wounded, and 684 arrested).

Cristea does not note—and may not know—that the text of the transcripts appears to be the same as what was published in *Libertatea* between 27 January and 15 February 1990 under the heading “Dintre sute de...catarge! [From hundreds of “masts!” (the radio identification for USLA officers conducting surveillance)].” When they appeared at the time, it was not clear from where the transcripts had come, although the absence of exchanges from the period of bloodiest repression overnight was obvious even then. Still, the truncated transcripts nevertheless revealed clear USLA involvement in the repression in Bucharest. According to the transcript, upon the orders of Securitate Director General Vlad, the USLA launched tear gas grenades at demonstrators. They also show USLA “intervention units” claiming to have “restored order” and one USLA member communicating in reference to protesters, “These hooligans must be annihilated at once. They are not determined. They must be taken quickly. The rest are hesitating.”

That more than a decade and a half would pass before these transcripts were reproduced is telling in itself. For what appeared in the Romanian press in January and February 1990 concerning the USLA's culpability was to melt away beginning with Army General Stanculescu's exoneration of them on 26 and 28 February 1990 in an interview with the very same *Libertatea*. The USLA had already been trying to “correct” the memories of citizens, prior to Stanculescu's “clarification” of their role. When a participant in the demonstrations at Piata Romana in central Bucharest related on 12 January 1990 in *Libertatea* the role of the USLA in beating demonstrators there on the 21st and later the presence of the USLA among the gunmen who killed demonstrators in University Square in the early hours of 22 December, USLA chief Ardeleanu rushed to issue a public denial in the paper several days later. But it was, as I have noted, Stanculescu's official sanction of the revisionist history of the USLA's actions that opened the floodgates.

It took almost four years—following Horia Alexandrescu's “Heroes in Action” series and Petre Mihai Bacanu's impassioned postscripts in his “Intercon 21/22” series protesting the USLA's innocence—before Bacanu returned in *Romania Libera* and declared that, on the basis of what he claimed was “new” information from Army soldiers who had been in the square that bloody “longest night of the year,” he had changed his mind about the USLA's role:

“Very many officers talk about these ‘civilians’ in long raincoats and sheepskin coats, who arrested demonstrators from within the crowd and then beat them brutally...No one has been interested until now in these dozens of ‘civilians’ with hats who shot through the pockets of their clothes...For a time we gave credence to the claims of the USLA troops that they were not present in University Square. We have now entered into the possession of information which shows that 20 USLA officers, under the command of Colonel Florin Bejan, were located...among the demonstrators.”¹⁶⁴

In March 2006, Cristea quoted Nicolae Victor Gheorghe, 38, as saying:

“...Around 23:30 I was arrested with a group that had fled toward the History Museum. We were surrounded by USLA. I was surprised to observe that among us several individuals dressed in fur-lined coats stepped forward and pointed out to the ones with the shields who to arrest....We were beaten. I lost consciousness and when I woke up I was face-down in a van. I was full of blood. On top of me had been thrown a pile of other demonstrators. We were taken directly to Jilava [jail].”¹⁶⁵

Significantly, USLA Commander Gheorghe Ardeleanu admitted in passing in court testimony that USLA personnel operated in civilian clothes on this evening.¹⁶⁶ At the very least, it is clear that uniformed USLA personnel participated in the repression. An official at the National Theater—located next to the Hotel Intercontinental in University Square—claims USLA troops beat demonstrators and policed the building to see if any were hiding there.¹⁶⁷ According to the Military Prosecutor’s 4 June 1990 charges: “The witness [Spiru Radet] specified that one of the soldiers from the USLA troops, who had a machine gun in his hand, fired warning shots and then shot at the demonstrators. At that point, the witness was wounded in the hand by bullets and transported to Coltea Hospital.”¹⁶⁸

Certainly, USLA who were involved in the events of 21-22 December 1989 or who came in contact with the demonstrators who were involved were merciless, and behaved as if they had something to hide. In summer 1990, *Expres* reported on two young men recovering in an Italian hospital from wounds inflicted during the December events.¹⁶⁹ They recalled how, at the Intercontinental on 21-22 December, “those in kaki [i.e. Securitate, likely USLA] shot us. The first two rows of troops [Army] shot tracers, while those behind them opened live fire.” The two, one injured on the 21st, the other on the 23rd, claimed that after they arrived in Italy, a certain 40 year old Iordan Cristian, who admitted to them he had been USLA, visited the hospital—he had been shot in the hand at an earlier time and recovered (!)—snatched any reading material showing photos of the 13-15 June rampage against the opposition in Bucharest, and kept them in a general state of fear. In addition, he asked them to surrender their passports, something which “made even the Italians realize something was not quite right in all of this.”

Similarly, in an article that captures in a microcosm the complexity and fluidity of the first years of the post-Ceausescu era, one-time leader of the small “Liberal Democratic Party,” Elena Serban, maintains she was blackmailed in 1990 by Radu Grigore (a name that was to crop up again in some of the more underhanded political affairs of 1991-1992) who threatened her that “...if I betrayed him, he would kill me, and that I only needed to remember he had been an USLA officer...who had been in charge of the USLA machine-gun detachments on the night of 21 December in University Square.”¹⁷⁰

It is noteworthy that eyewitnesses who reached the top of the CC building in Bucharest at noon on 22 December 1989 report that they were prevented from arresting the Ceausescus by two armed individuals in “dark jumpsuits”—i.e. likely either V-a or USLA/C.¹⁷¹ In Tirgoviste, where the Ceausescus were later to meet their end, shortly

after 12:30 PM on 22 December 1989, Army Colonel Gheorghe Badea relates the following:

“At a given moment, after spirits had calmed a bit, I heard a voice: ‘Colonel, get out of here or we’ll shoot you!’ I turned in the direction from which the voice had come and, behind me, I saw a detachment of USLA troops, with shields, arms, the whole nine yards...I don’t know who addressed me, but I said to them: ‘Don’t shoot boys... We are your brothers...’ At that point, the crowd surrounded them and they retreated.”¹⁷²

Constantin Paisie, one of the Militia officers involved in the transport and custody of the Ceausescus later that afternoon of 22 December, makes clear upon whom the Ceausescus were placing their bets to rescue them:

*“Sir, they didn’t know what was going on. Indeed, they gave indications that they were waiting for someone to come and take them away to some place in which they would be more secure, for, you see, first and foremost they were banking on the Securitate. I know that at a moment, Nicolae Ceausescu told me to take him to a unit of the Securitate, a **special unit at Baneasa**, but from the Militia and the Army he didn’t expect any immediate help.”¹⁷³*

Here’s betting that the “special unit” at Baneasa in question was the one Marian Romanescu departed from above (page 39)—using a cover ID—the “Special Unit for Antiterrorist Warfare,” based at Baneasa...

One thing should be abundantly clear here: notwithstanding the overwhelming consensus that prevailed for years in the Romanian media denying USLA involvement in the pre-22 December repression, it turns out the USLA were, after all, deeply implicated. This fact should be kept in mind when one considers the reluctance of Romanian journalists and intellectuals to reassess the question of the USLA and the “terrorists” after the realization of the USLA’s pre-22nd role, and the current and continuing overwhelming consensus that denies the “lie with the terrorists.”¹⁷⁴

The Drumbeat of the Myth of the “Heroic” Prosecutor Voinea Grows Nearer

The construction of Prosecutor Dan Voinea’s “heroic” image—better yet, *myth*¹⁷⁵—is well under way. No doubt, the story will be ineluctable for the international press (already in June 2006 *Le Monde* ran an article of the kind)¹⁷⁶ once Voinea “finalizes” the files of the Revolution, perhaps this December, in time for the 17th anniversary of the events (fittingly, a decade since the anti-Iliescu opposition first came to power). And it undeniably makes for a great story: the man who was one of the tribunal that sentenced Ceausescu to death “admits to having been duped,” he has since committed himself to a one-man struggle for the “truth”...and finally it is being realized. Romania’s long nightmare, as Voinea has referred to it, will finally be over.¹⁷⁷

Or will it?

Even if Voinea were getting things right, it is true the second-guessing, questioning, and reconsideration would continue. That is simply the nature of human events, especially contentious key historical moments in a modern media age. But I believe the accumulation through the years of so much convincing countervailing evidence, the continued telling and retelling by participants of accounts that don't square with Voinea's forced conclusions—despite the deaf ear much of the Romanian media has shown toward them—and Voinea's ties to the Ceausescu regime (a military prosecutor since 1982) and his presence and role at the trial of the Ceausescus, will provide more impetus for reinterpretation and challenges to Voinea's conclusions than a typical historical event does.

At the same time, the “group think” among Romanian journalists and intellectuals that has prevailed on the question of the “terrorists” for so long and the *conviction* and certainty of so many of them—captured so well in Stejarel Olaru's wish expressed to Voinea in his open letter quoted earlier: “...on 17 December 2006 I can enjoy for the rest of my long life that I could see two defendants in the box and not just one: Nicolae Ceausescu and Ion Iliescu”—will continue to prevent acceptance and serious presentation and discussion of any evidence that does not incriminate Iliescu and other senior Front officials of the time.

So the next stage in this—and one cannot be clear how long this will take or how strong it will be—is likely the argument that the “terrorists” did in fact exist, and that Voinea's decision to argue otherwise is designed to protect Iliescu and his comrades from even greater embarrassment and punishment.¹⁷⁸ True, that will still leave us a fair distance from what happened, but at least it will bring us a step to closer to admitting the “terrorists” existence and revealing their affiliation with the Securitate. Small steps are probably the best we can hope for, given the present starting point.

Until then the “terrorists” will remain only a hallucination. For that feat, the only appropriate response to Prosecutor Voinea and his promoters and embracers at home and abroad is *aplauze indelungate*.¹⁷⁹

¹ Quote from Andrei Cornea, “The Curse of Ceausescu,” January 1998, in English, at <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentaries/commentary>.

² Recounted in George Baleanu, “Romania at a Historic Crossroads,” Conflict Studies Research Centre No. G65, found at www.pims.org/Events/Projects/CSRC/g65.htm, and second quote from Cornea, “The Curse of Ceausescu.”

³ Adina Anghelescu, “Generalul Dan Voinea: ‘In dosarele din decembrie ’89 nu exista teroristi,” *Ziua*, 16 December 1998, online edition.

⁴ Oana Sima, “‘Nu au existat teroristi!’,” *Ziua*, 25 November 1999, online edition.

⁵ Jeremy Bransten, “Romania: The Bloody Revolution in 1989: Chaos As the Ceausescus Are Executed,” RFE/RFL, 14 December 1999 at <http://www.rferl.org/specials/communism/10years/romania2.asp>. For those coming to the Romanian Revolution for the first time, Brantsen’s series is an excellent journalistic introduction to the December 1989 events. By contrast, although like many people I continue to be amazed at the value of information that can be found in the Wikipedia, the Romanian Revolution entry (in both Romanian and English) is, to say the least, disappointing. An immediate flag to the entry’s credibility is its uncritical acceptance of the allegations of former Securitate Colonel Dumitru Burlan, Nicolae Ceausescu’s body-double. I have elsewhere discussed Burlan’s claims in “Doublespeak: The All-too-Familiar Tales of Nicolae Ceausescu’s Double,” which can be found online.

⁶ Jeremy Bransten, “Romania: The Bloody Revolution in 1989: Historic Facts Remain Obscured,” RFE/RL, 15 December 1999 at <http://www.rferl.org/specials/communism/10years/romania3.asp>.

⁷ Gabriel Hizo, “Pentru prima data in ultimii zece ani, un sondaj de opinie national ii intreaba pe cetateni ce cred despre evenimentele din decembrie 1989,” *Ziua*, 17 November 1999, online edition.

⁸ Sorin Rosca Stanescu, “Lui Magureanu i-a iesit un porumbel din gura,” *Ziua*, 1 December 1999, online edition.

⁹ Marius Batca, “Teroristii tovarasului,” *Ziua*, 20 December 2005, online edition.

¹⁰ Nicolae Prelipceanu, “Craciunul de la Tirgoviste si urmarile sale,” *Romania Libera*, 26 December 2005, online edition.

¹¹ Stelian Tanase, “Diversiunea,” *Ziua*, 24 December 2005, online edition. Somehow, this saturation coverage appeared to elude Victor Roncea who in June 2006 wrote, “Sixteen years after the December events the same prosecutor general who has been swimming for years in the files of the ‘Revolution Dossier,’ Dan Voinea, declared—without the central press observing the weight of the announcement [!!!]—that there doesn’t exist any proof of ‘terrorists’ firing into the population during the insurrection of 1989.” (Victor Roncea, “13-15 iunie, zile negre,” *Ziua*, 14 June 2006, online edition.)

¹² Liviu Cangeopol, “Realizarile Intregului Popor,” *New York Magazin*, 23 December 2005, no. 9 (issue 451), at http://www.nymagazin.com/html/451_liviu_cangeopol.html.

¹³ Stejarel Olaru, “O scrisoare lui Dan Voinea,” *Evenimentul Zilei*, 18 December 2005, online edition. It is worth noting here that those few voices that have been raised against Voinea belong to people who essentially nevertheless accept Voinea’s arguments with regard to the alleged non-existence of the “terrorists.” Cozmin Gusa accused Voinea in December 2005 of politicizing the investigations and of “playing the game of structures that could have triumphed in December 1989 and could in the future again,” but nonetheless maintains the 1989 events were a “coup d’etat.” Ion Cristoiu termed Voinea “sinister” but has declared his own views as follows:

“We have known for a long time now who won the diversion with the terrorists in December 1989: Ion Iliescu and the Army, which were disturbed that they could be called to account for its involvement in the repression of the preceding days. Ion Iliescu legitimized himself the savior of the nation against the horrible terrorists who, according to him, were shooting from all positions. Ion Iliescu created such arguments to justify the trial and execution of Nicolae Ceausescu, accused at his trial by Dan Voinea of having put into action the terrorist campaign in order to reconquer power. To the Army, was offered the opportunity to cross over in the eyes of the populace as those who were fighting to save the conquests of the Revolution from the terrorists with whom they were fighting....Concerning the terrorist affair from December 1989, which miraculously served the new potentates of Romania to consolidate their power and to execute the Ceausescus, we have not yet found out [the truth], although the hypothesis of a diversion, launched by myself

among others, in the article “22 December—an afternoon with too many questions,” from the 23 February 1990 edition of *Expres*, has now become the standard. In December 1989, the price of this affair was huge: over 1,000 innocent deaths, a chief of state (Nicolae Ceausescu) executed, together with his wife, after a farce of a trial....” (see Ion Cristoiu, “De la teroristii din 1989 la Teroristul din 2005,” *Jurnalul National*, 21 June 2005, online edition.)

In other words, Cristoiu believes that the terrorists were a myth created by those who seized power—i.e. Voinea’s argument.

¹⁴ Interview with General Dan Voinea, by Romulus Cristea, “Toti alergau dupa un inamic invizibil [Everyone was chasing after an invisible enemy],” *Romania Libera*, 22 December 2005 online edition.

¹⁵ “‘Trebuie sa demascam si sa lichidam actiunea,’” *Jurnalul National*, 17 November 2004, online edition.

¹⁶ Quoted in Vlad Mihai, “Recurs la adevar. Profesionistii diversiunii,” *Dimineata*, no. 244 (1801), December 1996, online edition.

¹⁷ Dumitru Mazilu, interview by Emanoil Catan, “Mari Mistificari ale Istoriei Revolutiei Romane,” *Expres Magazin*, no. 64 (September 1991), p. 12.

¹⁸ Rodica Chelaru, “De la Revolutie la cantina saracilor,” *Expres*, no. 101 (7-13 January 1992), p. 10.

¹⁹ Mircea Dinescu, with Eugen Evu, “Dialoguri integrale in forum: ‘Tenebre romanian color,’” 1997 at <http://www.agero-stuttgart.de>. Inevitably, such claims recall initial reporting about the December events: according to Blaine Harden on 30 December 1989, “In the days of street fighting that followed, he [a soldier] said, Securitate forces played tape recordings of gunfire over hidden speakers to confuse soldiers into firing their weapons.” See Blaine Harden, “Elite Unit of Romanian Secret Police Seen Battling to the Death,” *The Washington Post*, 30 December 1989, p. A14.

²⁰ Vasile Surcel, “19 oameni au murit la Arad in zilele Revolutiei,” *Jurnalul National*, 29 October 2004, online edition. Pinte Mos recounted in 2004 that in Arad in December 1989, “at the unit in Gai, on the covers of the entrance gunfire simulators were found.” See “Remember 1989: Revolutie de la Brasov,” 21 December 2003, at www.arhiva.informatia.ro. and “Remember decembrie 1989,” 22 August 2005 at www.einformatii.ro concerning events in Brasov and Satu Mare. For an older account placing them in Brasov, see Adrian Socaciu, “Cronica unei morti inexplicabile,” *Cuvintul*, January 1991, reproduced at http://www.portalulrevolutiei.ro/arhiva/1991_226.html. In Sibiu, “The locals are convinced that in Sibiu the famous ‘gunfire simulators’ ‘functioned,’ electronic apparatuses, not very complex, were placed in the attics of houses, but also on certain official buildings, that created panic among people through the broadcast of sounds similar to automatic gunfire” (Andreea Tudorica and Vasile Surcel, “Misterul disparitiei ‘baietilor in negru’, [“The mystery of the disappearance of ‘the boys in black’”], *Jurnalul National*, 15 September 2004, online edition.)

²¹ Interview with General Dan Voinea, by Romulus Cristea, “Toti alergau dupa un inamic invizibil,” *Romania Libera*, 22 December 2005 online edition.

²² Alexandru Cristescu, quoted in Cornel Dumitrescu, “Alte Dezvaluiri Senationale despre decembrie ‘89,” *Lumea Libera* (New York), 18 March 1995, p. 21.

²³ Andreea Tudor and Vasile Surcel, “Mecanismul Terorii,” *Jurnalul National*, December 2004, online edition.

²⁴ Razvan Belciuganu, “Armele cu care au tras teroristii,” *Jurnalul National*, 6 December 2004, online edition.

²⁵ Posted on <http://forum.softpedia.com/lofiversion/index.php/t18855.html>, 2 December 2003.

²⁶ Posted on <http://forum.softpedia.com/lofiversion/index.php/t96198.html>, 15 December 2005.

²⁷ Professor Andrei Firica, interview by Florin Condurately, “Teroristii din Spitalul de Urgenta,” *Jurnalul National*, 9 March 2004, online edition.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Interview with General Dan Voinea, by Romulus Cristea, “Toti alergau dupa un inamic invizibil,” *Romania Libera*, 22 December 2005 online edition. Contrast Voinea’s definitive negations with the statements of Army Colonel Ion Stoleru, not just right after the events, but several years later. According to Stoleru, the “terrorists” had “weapons with silencers, with scopes, for shooting at night time (in ‘infrared’), bullets with a ‘vidia’ tip. Really modern weapons. The civilian and military commissions haven’t followed through in investigating this...” (see Mihai Galatanu, “Din Celebra Galerie a

Teroristilor,” *Expres*, no. 151 (22-28 December 1992), p. 4, and Mihai Galatanu, “Am vazut trei morti suspecti cu fata intoarsa spre caldarim,” *Flacara*, no. 29 (22 July 1992), p. 7.)

³⁰ Romulus Nicolae, “Au ars dosarele procuraturii despre evenimente din decembrie,” *Cuvintul*, no. 32 (August 1991), pp. 4-5. Approximately 100 people died and 250 were injured in Brasov during the December events.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Andrei N. in Alin Alexandru, “Brasov (III). Teroristii au intrat in pamint,” *Expres*, no. 27 (July 1990), p. 6. See also Ilie Stoian, *Decembrie '89. Arta diversiunii*. (Bucharest: Editura Colaj, 1993), p. 44.

³³ Ciprian Banciu, “Braila—lotcile ucigase,” *NU* (Cluj), no. 22 (24-31 August 1990), p. 7.

³⁴ Aurel Dragomir, interview by Viorel Patrichi, “Conspiratiile nu erau de nasul meu!” (2), *Lumea Magazin*, 2002 (no. 6), online at www.lumeam.ro/nr6_2002/politica_si_servicii_secrete.html.

³⁵ Ion Neata, interview by Major Mihai Floca, “Unde sint teroristii?,” *Armata Poporului*, no. 30 (25 July 1990), p. 3.

³⁶ Grudgingly admitted by Col Stefan Demeter, former chief of the Timis County Militia’s armament office, in Stefan Demeter, interview by Radu Ciobotea, “M.I.—Martor Incomod,” *Flacara*, no. 33 (14 August 1991), pp. 4-5.

³⁷ Codrescu Costache, Radu Olaru, Mircea Seteanu, and Constantin Monac, *Armata Romana in Revolutia din Decembrie 1989* (Bucharest: Editura Militara, 1998), p. 157.

³⁸ Richard Andrew Hall, “Rewriting the Revolution: Authoritarian Regime-State Relations and the Triumph of Securitate Revisionism in Post-Ceausescu Romania,” Ph.D. Dissertation, 1997, Indiana University, p. 322, citing Victor Dinu, *Romania Libera*, 12 April 1990, p. 2.

³⁹ *Revolutia Romana in Direct* (Bucuresti: Televiziunea Romana, 1990), pp. 133-134, quoted in Hall 1997, p. 322.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Al. Mihalcea, “O gafa monumentală,” *Romania Libera*, 31 October 1990, p. 5a.

⁴¹ Tiberiu Urdareanu, *1989—Martor si Participant* (Bucharest: Editura Militara, 1996), p. 139.

⁴² Interview by Aurel Perva and Gavrilă Inoan, *Tineretul Liber*, 5 March 1991, pp. 1-2, as translated in FBIS-EEU-91-047, 11 March 1991, p. 39.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, using FBIS translation.

⁴⁴ Interviewed by Dan Badea, “Gloante speciale sau ce s-a mai gasit in cladirea Directiei a V-a,” *Expres*, 16-22 April 1991.

⁴⁵ Elena Bancila, *Trage Lasule!* (Bucuresti: Editura Victor Frunza, 1990), pp. 65-66 (from *Adevarul*, 13 January 1990), and quote from pp. 94-95. Bancila also claimed that a hospital nurse had told her some of those killed appeared to have been the victims of “exploding bullets” (see the series by Cristina Balint and Nicolae Tone in *Tineretul Liber* in September 1991, particularly part XI “Eu nu pot fi cumparata [I can’t be bought],” and part XII “Daca altfel nu se poate, voi cere deshumarea [If there is no other way, I’ll ask for his body to be exhumed], 22 and 24 September 1991 respectively). In this series, the bullet that killed her son is referred to as “under 6 mm.”

⁴⁶ Dan Iliescu, interview by Ion Zubascu, “Misterioasa revolutie romana,” *Flacara*, no. 51 (19 December 1990), p. 11.

⁴⁷ Radu Ciobotea, “Teroristii au tras. Unde sint teroristii?” *Flacara*, no. 8 (21 February 1990), p. 8.

⁴⁸ Dinel Staicu is one of those “personages” of the post-communist era. He is something more than the hallucinatory former Militia officer, Sergeant Petre Olaru (see my discussion in “The Securitate Roots of a Modern Romanian Fairy Tale. Part 3: The Hypnotic Spell of Sergeant Petre Olaru,” *Radio Free Europe Research “East European Perspectives*,” May 2002, online). But, for post-communist, or as is now said, post-post-communist, surrealism, he is probably something less than fellow soccer magnate, Gigi Becali—see, for example “Elita lui Gigi,” *Cotidianul*, 13 September 2006, online. Reporters from ProSport claimed that Dinel Staicu told them he purchased for 2,000 dollars the original copy of the extraordinary military tribunal decision condemning the Ceausescus to death. That document had apparently been missing from the archives of the Bucharest Territory Military Tribunal (TMTB) since 1990, and although Staicu denied he is in possession of the original, he apparently supplied the TMTB with xeroxes of the document—after being fined for failing to present the original—so that the TMTB could reconstitute the judgment (see Razvan Savaliuc, “S-a reconstituit dosarul procesului Ceausescu,” *Ziua*, 20 March 2004, online edition). For a discussion of Staicu’s 200 hectare “Parcul RSR,” dedicated to Ceausescu’s “Golden Epoch” see Lucian Cazan, “‘Domnul si tovarasul’ Staicu,” *Cotidianul*, 7 October 2005, online edition. On Nicoale Ceausescu’s 88th birthday, Staicu’s 3TV station apparently celebrated the occasion with footage

from “The Golden Epoch,” see Lucian Cazan, “Oltenii, invitati sa se joace cu Michiduta,” *Cotidianul*, 27 January 2006, online edition. Exactly what the mix of communist and post-communist corruption, genuine admiration for Nicolae Ceausescu and “the Golden Epoch,” entrepreneurship, greed, and playing to foreign tourists (Russian, according to Cazan, and Western), motivates Staicu is unclear.

⁴⁹ “‘Antimafia’—Un Armagedon de Craiova,” *Adevarul*, 3 May 2002, online edition.

⁵⁰ Reprinted from the testimony of Dinel Staicu in the Craiovan publication *Cartel* (8 April 1992), Dinel Staicu: “Misunea mea a fost sa-l infiltrez pe Sandu in prefectura,” *Gazeta de Sud*, 23 December 2002, online at <http://www.gds.ro/print/13885>.

⁵¹ In the interview cited above in which Mircea Dinescu discusses the existence of simulators, his interlocutor, Eugen Evu, notes in passing the presence of “vidia” bullets in yet another locality, this time, Hunedoara: “The same scenario, everywhere that people were shot. And in Hunedoara, I swear that they shot at me, I was in front of the Post Office, with a trade union woman... Traces, holes of a vidia bullet, next to a normal one, remained for a long time in the window at the entrance to the Post Office, they shot at me, I had long been followed by securisti and some militie people, who would periodically arrest me.” See Mircea Dinescu, with Eugen Evu, “Dialoguri integrale in forum: ‘Tenebre romanian color,’” 1997 at <http://www.agero-stuttgart.de>.

⁵² Maior A.D., “Scenariile si Realitatea: Marturie la dosarul ‘Teroristi’ (VI),” *Timpul* (ed. Raoul Sorban), 1 March 1991, p. 11.

⁵³ See Raportul SRI EPISODUL I (2/2) Timisoara ’89 at www.ceausescu.org/ceausescu/texts/revolution/raportul_sri12.htm. As if to confirm the suspicions, Securitate officer Filip Teodorescu told the Gabrielescu Commission that “Whoever had the idea to dress [them] in combinezoane negre had a clever idea!” (using the English translation at en.wikisource.org/wiki/Stenograma_sedintei_de_audiere_din_14_decembrie_1994).

⁵⁴ Posted on the web forum at *Jurnalul National*, April 2006, online edition.

⁵⁵ Stoian, *Arta Diversiunii*, 1993, pp. 55-57.

⁵⁶ Ing. Mircea Georgescu, “Sibiu (III),” *Expres*, no. 28 August 1990.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Dan Badea, “Secretle Revolutiei,” *Expres* no. 22 (6-13 June 1994), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Alin Alexandru, “Brasov (II): Linistea dinaintea macelului,” *Expres*, no. 26 (July 1990).

⁵⁹ Marian Valer, interview by Monica N. Marginean, “Asistam la ingroparea Revolutiei [We are witnessing the burying of the Revolution],” *Expres*, no. 33 (September 1990), p. 2. In 1994, Dragomir maintained: “After the events some declarations given to the investigating commission disappeared, as well as notebooks filled with the recordings of officers on duty, and a map that had markings of the houses from where there was gunfire.” See his comments in Dan Badea, “Secretele Revolutiei,” *Expres*, no. 22 (7-13 June 1994), p. 9.

⁶⁰ Dumitru Mazilu, “Cine sint teroristii?” *Flacara*, no. 39 (25 September 1991), p. 4.

⁶¹ Dumitru Mazilu, “Cine sint teroristii?” *Flacara*, no. 41 (9 October 1991), p. 4.

⁶² Sergiu Nicolaescu, interview by Alex Mihai Stoenescu (2 September 2003), “Teroristi din URSS, Ungaria si Occident,” *Jurnalul National*, 10 December 2004, online edition.

⁶³ See the comments of Ardeleanu (p. 119) and Montanu (p. 147) to the Ceausist weekly *Europa* reprinted in Angela Bacescu, *Din Nou in Calea Navalirilor Barbare* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura ‘Zalmoxis,’ 1994).

⁶⁴ Captain Marian Romanescu, with Dan Badea, “USLA, Bula Moise, teroristii si ‘Fratii Musulmani,’” *Expres* (2-8 July 1991), p. 8. What makes this eminently believable too is that the parties present, and Ardeleanu himself, apparently viewed the FSN for the most part as just the rebaptized Communist Party!

⁶⁵ Tiberiu Urdareanu, *1989—Martor si Participant* (Bucharest: Editura Militara, 1996), p. 137.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Gheorghe Ratiu, interview with Ilie Neacsu, *Europa*, episode 18, 22 March-4 April 1995.

⁶⁸ Urdareanu, *1989—Martor si Participant*, p. 138.

⁶⁹ William Totok, *Constangerea memoriei. Insemnari, documente, amintiri* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2001), pp. 186-203.

⁷⁰ The *Europa* interview from 1991 appears in Bacescu, *Din Nou in Calea Navalirilor Barbare*, 1994, p. 67.

⁷¹ Col. (r) Ion Lemnar, “Piramida de minciuni a lui Roland Vasilevici,” *Spionaj-Contraspionaj*, no. 24 (March 1992), p. 7a. It appears that after “Puspoki F.,” Vasilevici adopted the pseudonym “Romeo Vasiliu” in publishing his revelations in pamphlet form.

⁷² Roland Vasilevici, interview with Mireca Iovan, *Cuvintul*, no. 119 (May 1992), p. 8.

⁷³ See *Romania Libera*, 28 December 1994, p. 3. It appears that during this interview Vasilevici invoked the presence of Libyans and their spiriting out of the country immediately after the events—for the discussion of this incident see below.

⁷⁴ See Tinu's comments in the 13 August 2006 posting of a Radio Impact interview by Gabriel Argeseanu with Radu Tinu from 18 February 1999 at www.agonia.ro/index.php/article/198457/index.html.

⁷⁵ "Dezvaluiri despre implicarea USLA in evenimentele din decembrie '89," *Romania Libera*, 28 December 1994, p.3

⁷⁶ Teodor Filip, a former USLA officer, was apparently intrigued enough by this article that he went to the trouble of tracking down the identity of the correspondent of the dispatch. According to Filip, the correspondent was Sterie Petrescu, who Filip claims was later expelled by both AM Press (Dolj) and *Romania Libera* for printing "scandalous disinformation," and removed in 1996 from his position as head of Dolj County for the anti-Iliescu regime "Civic Alliance," after which he had legal motions lodged against him. Filip claims immediately after the above dispatch came out, he published rejoinders in the daily *Crisana Plus*. In those responses, he rejected the claims of the dispatch in their entirety. According to Filip: "during the December 1989 events, not a single member of USLA was dispatched into the field...[and] the USLA did not commit a single act [of repression] against demonstrators [! See the discussion below on this issue]" See Teodor Filip, *Secretele USLA* (Craiova: Editura Obiectiv, 1998), pp. 109-111.

⁷⁷ Sergiu Tanasescu, interview by Ion K. Ion, "Dinca si Postelnicu au fost prinsi de pantera roz!" *Cuvintul*, no. 8-9, 28 March 1990, 15.

⁷⁸ Former USLA Captain Marian Romanescu, with Dan Badea, "USLA, Bula Moise, teroristii si 'Fratii Musulmani'," *Expres* (2-8 July 1991), p. 8.

⁷⁹ Dan Ioan cited in Urdareanu, *1989—Martor si Participant*, 1996, p. 138.

⁸⁰ Blaine Harden, "Doors Unlocked on Romania's Secret Police," *The Washington Post*, 30 December 1989 p. A1; A14.

⁸¹ Mirel Paun, "Ion Capatana: 'Argeseni, va cer scuze ca am participat la Revolutie!'" *Cotidianul Argesul*, 5/8/05 online at <http://www.cotidianul-argesul.ro>.

⁸² Interestingly and notably, Craciun, who attempted in these days to form a political party with other revolutionaries, bitterly describes how the vague language that emerged in Front declarations by the ultimatum of the 27th—suggesting anyone without authorization was prohibited from carrying an arm—allowed the rump party-state that was the Front to essentially crush any alternative nascent groups of anti-communist opposition. That said, it is important to point out that Craciun had no doubt as to the existence of the "terrorists" that fought in these days; he describes matters as follows: "...for five days they fought against the last partisans of the 'Conducator' [i.e. Ceausescu], the terrorists who attacked every night, using secret tunnels that allowed them to communicate between different government buildings. The battlefield was well-defined: Piata Republicii, on the one hand, the Presidential Palace, to which the terrorists would repair, on the other." See Liviu Viorel Craciun, with Horatiu Firica, "Destainuirile unui ministru de interne," *Zig-Zag*, no. 70, 71, 72 (July and August 1991), p. 6, quotes from issue no. 72.

Soldiers entered the tunnels of the former Central Committee building, with Major Gheorghe Grigoras and Nicolae Grigoras, of the special unit for antiterrorist warfare [i.e. USLA]. The museum curator Dan Falcan relates the findings of the soldiers as follows:

"...in the basement of the building they found a tunnel, not very long, that descended into a type of barracks. There were eight rooms with folding beds. These rooms gave way to many hallways, one leading to the second floor of the building. Via another hallway a larger bunker 7 meters deep could be reached. This led to an armored door and a spacious apartment, 9 meters deep. The soldiers found a room with a ventilation system and from there found a new corridor. After going approximately 30 meters the soldiers noticed an alcove with a large trunk, in which there were 16 rubber rafts with pumps. Twenty meters forward they found another room with synthetic...10 meters further and they were under water.... Following reconnaissance it was discovered that there were exits to 80 objectives in Bucharest, such as the ASE building, the Enescu House, the Romanian Opera, etc...." (Sorin Golea, "Cai de navigatie secrete sub Bucuresti," *Libertatea*, 22 December 2002, online edition, originally accessed at <http://news.softpedia.com/news/1/2002/December/1913.shtml>.)

⁸³ B. Mihalache, *Romania Libera*, 19 December 2004, online edition.

⁸⁴ Document reproduced in E. O. Ohanesian, "Pe stil vechi-colonel de securitate, pe stil nou-general NATO," *Romania Libera*, 8 April 2004, online edition.

⁸⁵ Marian Romanescu with Dan Badea, "USLA, Bula Moise, teroristii si Fratii Musulmani," *Expres*, no. 26 (2-8 July 1991), p. 8. In no.8 (23-30 March 1990) *Expres* p. 8, Cornel Nistorescu wrote in "Tot Felul,"

"Our compatriots tried and are trying to sell a lie: that the USLA had no role in guarding the dictator. Mr. General Stanculescu, we communicate publicly to you something you know: that every time Ceausescu went out in Bucharest, in each convoy there was an USLA team. And for Ceausescu's visit to Iran on flight RO 247 of 9 December to Istanbul and on to Tehran were the following: Mortoriu Aurel, Ardeleanu Gheorghe, Bucuci Mihai, Ivan Gelu, Grigore Corneliu, Floarea Nicolae, Rotar Ion and Grecu Florin. These weren't diplomats and they weren't going for a snack."

⁸⁶ "Marturii din 23 decembrie," *Ziua*, 23 December 2005, online edition.

⁸⁷ Gheorghe Ratiu, interview by Ilie Neacsu (episode 17), *Europa*, 7-22 March 1995, cited in Hall 1997, p. 366.

⁸⁸ See Michael Shafir, "Preparing for the Future by Revising the Past," *Radio Free Europe Report on Eastern Europe*, vol. 1, no. 41 (12 October 1990), p. 36.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Shafir, "Preparing for the Future," p. 37, fn. 35; also FBIS, 30 December 1989, for the last quote.

⁹⁰ See Sergiu Nicolaescu, *Revolutia: inceputul adevarului* (Bucharest: Editura TOPAZ, 1995), concluding chapter. The Libyan ambassador gave a hasty statement on Romanian Television on 25 December 1989, becoming the first foreign ambassador to recognize the new government, according to Valenas et. al. (see next note #91, and Ratesh 1991, pp. 65-66). According to FBIS, Bucharest's Domestic Service on 30 December 1989 announced Dumitru Mazilu of the Front had met with "Qadafi's representative."

⁹¹ See Liviu Valenas, "Lovitura de palat din Romania: Capii complotului dezvaluie," *Baricada*, no. 32 (21 August 1990), p.3. The speculation by Ratesh that the "anonymous plotters" were "surely Brucan and Militaru" seems correct; in fact, their photos appear in the center of the article, see Nestor Ratesh, *Romania: The Entangled Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1991), p. 65. Ion Cristoiu maintained in 1993 that, Gelu Voican Voiculescu, a key figure in the early Front, had then recently told him, that the British photo journalist (Ian Parry) who perished in the still murky incident surrounding the shooting down of an AN-24 on 28 December 1989, "had stayed at the 'Hotel National' and discovered, it appears, on a list many Libyans." See Constantin Iftime, *Cu ION CRISTOIU prin infernul contemporan* (Bucharest: Editura Contraria, 1993), pp. 31-32.

⁹² Toma Roman, jr. and Lucia Stefanovici, "In 25 decembrie 1989, un avion DC9 venit din Libia as scos din tara 40 de arabi, la ordinul unui 'emanat,'" *Flacara*, no 43 (25-31 October 1994), p. 6.

⁹³ Shafir, "Preparing the Past," p. 37, fn. 35.

⁹⁴ Constantin Vranceanu, "Planul 'Z-Z' si telefonul rosu," *Romania Libera*, 28 September 1990, p. 3. The information was given, according to Vranceanu, to him by a high-level anonymous political personality and supposedly confirmed by people of high-rank in the Securitate. Vranceanu claimed he was told Soviet pressure led the countries involved to renounce fulfilling their end of the agreement.

⁹⁵ Ratesh, *Romania: The Entangled Revolution*, pp. 66-67, quoting Radio Bucharest, 2 February 1990. I don't think from the context given it is clear that this alleged incident took place in January 1990, as Ratesh assumes; the reference to 27-28 might have been a reference to December 1989.

⁹⁶ Liviu Valenas, "Lovitura de palat din Romania: Enigma ,teroristilor (I)," *Baricada*, no. 29 (31 July 1990), p. 3. Once again, I am unsure of the accuracy of the date used here, this time by Valenas.

⁹⁷ Horia Alexandrescu, "Adevarul despre U.S.L.A.: Pornind de la ,Odiseea Zborului RO-259'," *Tineretul Liber*, 14 March 1990, p.4. He is quoting Rodica Dumitrescu's article in *Lumea*, no. 5 (1 February 1990).

⁹⁸ I should add here: they actually returned to airport duties in July 1990, but not before protests by airport employees.

⁹⁹ "Cum ocheau teroristii?" *Armata Poporului*, no. 3 (17 January 1990), p. 6. Such devices were recovered from those arrested as "terrorists," see Razvan Belciuganu, "Armele cu care au tras teroristii," *Jurnalul National*, 6 December 2004, online edition.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Major Mihai Floca, "Reportaj la U.S.L.A.," *Tineretul Liber*, 5 January 1990, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Dan Iliescu, interview by Ion Zubascu, “Misterioasa revolutie romana,” *Flacara*, no. 51 (19 December 1990), p. 11.

¹⁰² Quoted in Viorel Domenico, *Ceausescu la Targoviste 22-25 decembrie 1989*. (Bucharest: Editura “Ion Cristoiu,” 1999), p. 157.

¹⁰³ See Dan Voinea, interview by Toma Roman, jr. and Laura Toma, “Surprizele generalului Dan Voinea—Cadavrele Ceausistilor, filmate de Topescu,” *Jurnalul National*, 3 November 2005, online edition. Read the “service/duty journals,” reports, and testimonies of soldiers of various ranks in Viorel Domenico, *Ceausescu la Targoviste: 22-25 decembrie 1989*, (Bucuresti: Editura ‘Ion Cristoiu,’ 1999), pp. 120-193, and you too may really begin to question Voinea’s motives for such definitive—definitively wrong—conclusions.

¹⁰⁴ Major Mihai Floca, “Actiune concertata impotriva pericolului,” *Romania Libera*, 29 December 1989, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 154. I can, of course, well sympathize with—and admire—how long it took Siani-Davies to convert his 1995 dissertation into a book! I must rely on incomplete notes here concerning Codrescu et. al. but even those suggest internal contradiction regarding V-a and other weapons. I find a reference on p. 262 along the lines of “few of V-a weapons being recovered...including Makarov, Steicikin, Walter pusti semiautomate cu luneta [i.e. PSL].” Elsewhere in Buzau we are told that “40 machine guns were missing” and that 22 armed civilians showed up at the headquarters of the Front with machine guns with folding tripod “that were not in the arsenal of the Army or the Patriotic Guards” with each having magazines “de tip sector, pline.” They said they had been armed by the “IJMI” or in other words the county inspectorate of the Interior Ministry (pp. 192-193). And in Braila, only 25 percent of personnel showed up at 1700 on 22 December at the IJMI, the rest only on 26 December with their weapons (p. 197).

¹⁰⁶ Hall 1997, pp. 319-323.

¹⁰⁷ There are in fact many issues Siani-Davies does not address—and understandably, they tend to play havoc with his bottom line on the supposed non-existence “terrorists.” For example, he wants to explain the deluge of misinformation about prospective or actual attacks that were phoned into the Television Studios as the result of people on TV having given out the telephone numbers. Fine, but such an explanation cannot explain the multiple reports by soldiers and others who were bombarded by phone calls at their military units. Were these numbers known? Announced on television? Of course not, but at a minimum one can guarantee the Securitate would have known them. According to the military, alone on 24 December 1989, the Chief of Staff Headquarters received 800 such phone calls (Codrescu et. al., p. 116)!

Similarly, there is the issue of false radar ‘bogeys,’ an issue which Prosecutor Voinea seeks to explain away as a kind of “computer game”—yes but if so by whom and to what end? Siani-Davies appears to skirt this issue completely and yet it has gained extensive coverage. A military aviation official, Colonel Mircea Budiaci, described the characteristics of the so-called “radio-electronic war” the armed forces faced, as follows:

“...we were confronted with a powerful adversary which operated on the basis of long-prepared plans which were centrally directed and permanently adapted to changing conditions. [They attacked] by radio-electronic means by creating signals on our radar identical to those which represented real targets. When they reached a distance between 800 and 1500 meters from an object on the ground they would simulate gunfire of various types of weapons. These two things created the image of an air attack. They were combined with ground attacks, real or false, with various types of telephone calls by identified or unidentified callers, and with the spreading of rumors...on our operating frequencies there were conversations between what were presumed to be aircraft in flight and base command. You didn’t know what to make of it, and the confusion was intensified by the fact that they were speaking not only in Romanian, but also in English, Turkish, and Arabic... You can imagine in what a situation we had to perform our duties...” (Colonel Mircea Budiaci, interview by Maior D. Amariei, “NU! Teroristii n-au avut elicoptere,” *Armata Poporului*, 21 March 1990, p. 4.)

What follows is amazing evidence that the “radar games” of December 1989 did not end there, something which totally explodes once again the stupidities about a war with one side or accident, Lt. Col. Alexandru Bodea (no. 22 May 1990 *Armata Poporului*):

On 9 January 1990, between the hours of 21:55 and 23:14, on the radar screens of the missile managers of one of the subordinate subunits there were detected signals coming from about 12 unidentified aircraft, that were deploying, at a height of 300 to 1800 meters, in the direction of a nearby locality.

The following day, between the hours of 03:00 and 04:15 again were detected the signals of six airships, after which—the same—between 17:00-18:00 and 21:30—the same type of signals, several aerial targets hovering at altitudes between 300-3000 meters, in the same direction as the previous day.

Then, as if to boost the belief of the missile officers that this was no accident, on the third day, 11 January, between the hours 0400-0500, again there appeared the signals of 7 unidentified aircraft, having essentially the same flight characteristics. What is curious is that not a single one of these targets was observed visually and no characteristic engine sounds were heard in the respective locations.

But even more curious is that, just then, from the central radio base of a nearby municipality, there arrived a communications unit that intercepted foreign signals on a particular bandwidth, in impulses, while on another frequency an intense traffic in Arabic or Turkish was noted.

In light of this information, the commander of the unit organized a radio inspection of numerous areas, with the help of transmissions’ equipment. Therefore, on 11 January 1990, between 1120 and 1130 on the respective frequency were received the code signs in English, 122 calling 49, 38, 89, 11, 82, 44, 38, 84, and asked if they “were doing well.”

From the fragments of discussions it could be understood that they were making references to explosives, hospitals, medicines, and wounded “for the hours 1400.” At 1330, on the same frequency, once again were intercepted conversations in which there was mention of wounded and requests for help. The transmissions were received over this, in which a more feminine voice and a dog’s bark could be clearly heard. References were made to the preceding conversations that were to follow at 1800, 1900, 2200, and then on 12 January 1990, at 0910.

Chatting with some citizens from the local area where these targets and foreign radio traffic were intercepted, the commander of the anti-aircraft unit to whom we referred found out that nearby there exists a wooded road (author’s note: the locality is in a mountainous area), surrounded by two rows of barbed wire, a road on which in fact there is no lumber transport. **Not by chance, since before the Revolution, the road was off-limits and was under the strict guard of the Securitate. [emphasis added]**

These same citizens further informed the unit’s commander, that after the Revolution, the road in question did not become a no-man’s land, remaining instead in the hands of people dressed as woodsmen but about whom those from the local lumber collective had no clue.

Who could these unknown “woodsmen” be? And what “affairs” did they have there? Perhaps exactly...[article concludes]

(For a more recent Internet discussion of such issues, see Razvan Belciuganu, “In decembrie 1989, toata Romania a fost bruiata,” *Jurnalul National*, 23 September 2004, online edition.)

¹⁰⁸ Angela Bacescu, *Romania Mare*, 7 September 1990, p. 5a; see also her allegations against Cirjan in the 21 August 1990 edition. The individual in question is apparently Constantin Cirjan, who in fact shows up

on the list of the initial 38 members of the National Salvation Front. For more speculation on this see Richard Andrew Hall, "The 1989 Romanian Revolution as Geopolitical Parlor Game: Brandstatter's 'Checkmate' Documentary and the Latest Wave in a Sea of Revisionism," 2005, online.

¹⁰⁹ Paul Vincius, "Moartea unui terorist," *Zig-Zag*, no. 106 (April 1992), p. 7. One of the documents attesting to the ownership of the weapon is reproduced in the article.

¹¹⁰ Christian Levant, "Carlos a primit tone de arme din Romania," *Evenimentul Zilei*, 6 September 2000, online edition.

¹¹¹ Major Mihai Floca and Captain Victor Stoica, "Unde sint teroristii? PE STRADA, PRINTRE NOI (I), [Where are the terrorists? ON THE STREET, AMONG US]," *Armata Poporului*, 13 June 1990, p. 3.

¹¹² Ibid..

¹¹³ Interview reproduced in Aurel Perva and Carol Roman, *Misterele revolutiei romane*, pp. 73-74.

¹¹⁴ From Sergiu Nicolaescu, *Revolutia. Inceputul Adevarului*. (Bucharest: Editura TOPAZ, 1995), pp. 244-245.

¹¹⁵ Major Mihai Floca and Captain Victor Stoica, "Unde sint teroristii? PE STRADA, PRINTRE NOI, [Where are the terrorists? ON THE STREET, AMONG US]," *Armata Poporului*, no. 24 (13 June 1990), p. 3 and no. 26 (27 June 1990), p. 1; 3.

¹¹⁶ Col. Gheorge Vaduva, "Soldatii au zambit si au incalcat ordinul," online at http://www.portarulrevolutiei.ro/arhiva2004_205.html.

¹¹⁷ Catalin Antohe, "Trei indivizi, in uniforme de armata," *Romania Libera*, 6 December 2005, online edition.

¹¹⁸ "Marturii despre teatrele de razboi ale Revolutiei Romane," *Romania Libera*, 7 December 2005, online edition.

¹¹⁹ Costache Codrescu et. al. *Armata romana in revolutia din decembrie 1989* (Bucharest: Editura Militara, 1998), p. 141.

¹²⁰ Major Mihai Floca and Captain Victor Stoica, "Unde sint teroristii? PE STRADA, PRINTRE NOI (I)," *Armata Poporului*, 13 June 1990, p. 3.

¹²¹ Ardeleanu's full report is reproduced in Dan Badea, "Cine au fost teroristii?" *Expres*, vol. 2, no. 41 (90), 15-21 October 1991, 15.

¹²² USLA Captain R. M. [Marian Romanescu], with Dan Badea, "U.S.L.A. in Stare de Hipnoza," *Expres*, no. 13 (62) (April 1991). It is interesting that he also notes that on the afternoon of 22 December 1989, "[USLA] officers received the orders to arm themselves with guns from another service dispatched to the field."

¹²³ Dan Badea, "Cine au fost teroristii?" *Expres*, no. 41 (90) (15-21 October 1991), p. 10; p. 15. Substantial sections of Ardeleanu's 8 January 1990 report are reproduced in this article.

¹²⁴ Lt. Col. Mihai Floca and a "group of officers from the Defense Ministry who participated directly in the events," *Adevarul*, 29 August 1990, p. 1-2.

¹²⁵ These numbers and discussion taken from both Badea, "USLA in stare de hipnoza," *Expres* (April 1991), and Floca et. al. in *Adevarul*, 29 August 1990.

¹²⁶ Hall 2005, "The 1989 Romanian Revolution as Geopolitical Parlor Game," online, citing Ardeleanu to *Europa*.

¹²⁷ Most recently, see Hall 2005, "The Romanian Revolution as Geopolitical Parlor Game," online.

¹²⁸ See the interviews in Major Mihai Floca, "Crima?" *Armata Poporului* (6 June 1990), p. 3.

¹²⁹ See Major Mihai Floca, "Crima?" *Armata Poporului* (6 June 1990), p. 3, and idem., "Eroi, victime, sau teroristi?" *Adevarul* 29 August 1990, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁰ Major Mihai Floca and Captain Victor Stoica, "Unde sint teroristii? PE STRADA, PRINTRE NOI," *Armata Poporului*, no. 24 (13 June 1990), p. 3 and no. 26 (27 June 1990), p. 1; 3.

¹³¹ See Siani-Davies 2005, p. 151, fn. 29. The letter appeared only three days prior to the Army response in *Adevarul* in August 1990.

¹³² Mihai Lupoi claims that on 22 December: "When Ardeleanu appeared, it was suggested that mixed teams from the Army and USLA be formed to clear out 'terrorists' from the basement of the CC and Television, an issue that had been discussed at the Defense Ministry [earlier that afternoon] without the participation of Mr. Iliescu" (Mihai Lupoi, with Sorin Rosca Stanescu, "Noi dezvaluiri pe marginea stenogramei, marelui consens," *Romania Libera*, 16 May 1990, p. 2.)

¹³³ Codrescu et. al., *Armata Romana in Revolutia din Decembrie 1989*, pp. 209-213. Vasile Surcel, "19 oameni au murit la Arad in zilele Revolutiei," *Jurnalul National*, 29 October 2004, online edition.

¹³⁴ Codrescu, et. al., p. 149.

¹³⁵ Lt. Col. Aurel Dragomir, “N-am nimic de ascuns!” *Armata Romaniei*, (1-7 June 1994), p.7.

¹³⁶ See Ilie Stoian, “La Resita s-a jucat o mare carte a Revolutiei,” *Expres* no.27 (July 1991), and “Ce zice fostul comandant al securitatii din Caras-Severin,” *Expres* no. 34 (27 August-2 September 1991), p. 10. Not without potential importance, Securitate Col. Aurel Mihalcea is supposed to have been responsible for the accommodation of 80 Arab “tourists” at Herculane, starting from 20 December 1989.

¹³⁷ Remus Ghergulescu, interview, “Planul de gherila urbana, pus in aplicare la Bucuresti,” *Jurnalul National*, 4 March 2004, online edition.

¹³⁸ P. Barbu, “O stea de maior pentru o leafa de senator,” *Flacara*, no. 21, 22 May 1991, p. 7.

¹³⁹ See Ernst Maftai, interview with Dan Badea, “Iliescu putea sa fie eroul neamului, dar a pierdut ocazia! [Iliescu could have been a national hero, but he squandered the opportunity!],” *Expres*, no. 36 (85) 10-16 September 1991. Maftai also details his own travels through the subterranean tunnels under the CC.

¹⁴⁰ Ioan Itu, “Mostenirea teroristilor,” *Tinerama*, no. 123 (9-15 April 1993), p. 7.

¹⁴¹ ROMPRES 8 March 1990 in FBIS 15 March 1990.

¹⁴² Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989*, p. 87, fn. 107: “For a detailed discussion of the part USLA may have played see Hall (1997), 219-224.”

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 151. I may in part have myself to blame for Siani-Davies some inappropriate choice of language here: i.e. the term “rosy image.” Siani-Davies highlights my use of the phrase “less-than-pure intentions” in describing the actions of the USLA unit at the Defense Ministry on 23-24 December (p. 152, fn. 31)—perhaps to suggest that even I had my doubts about their actions (see discussion of this episode earlier in article). My phrasing was inspired by the description of the event by Captain Victor Stoica who witnessed the incident: “Anyhow, based on how these two vehicles behaved, it is clear that they did not come with friendly intentions (‘intentii prietenești’)” (Major Mihai Floca, “Crima?!, *Armata Poporului*, no. 23, 6 June 1990, p. 3.)

¹⁴⁴ Horia Alexandrescu, “Eroi Cazuti la Datorie: Adevarul despre U.S.L.A.,” *Tineretul Liber*, 4 March 1990, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Octavian Andronic, “Combaterea terorismului—o chestiune la ordinea zilei,” *Libertatea*, 6 January 1990, p. 3. After the waters had subsided, and he had been “vindicated” in his beliefs about the USLA, he published a response to that article by people who asked “does the author have a vested interest in the rehabilitation of the USLA,” leaving off their names since, as they wrote, they did not want the USLA to “come defend [them]”, “Din Nou Despre U.S.L.A.: teroristi sau antiteroristi?” *Libertatea*, 9 May 1990, p. 2. As *Libertatea* was to remain in the Iliescu-Front camp in the initial years, allegations appeared against Andronic in *Evenimentul Zilei* that his house was rented from the SRI, the Securitate’s institutional successor, and had formerly been a safehouse of the Securitate, 14 May 1993, p. 3. If memory serves correct, years later in *Curierul National*, Andronic was to refer to finding out about the collapsing of the Ceausescu regime from USLA officer, Alexandru Ioan Kilin. These are circumstantial allegations but they suggest the possibility of at least close relations with former Securitate people—not unheard of for the former editor of a Ceausescu era paper.

¹⁴⁶ See Hall, 1997, pp. 183-184. It seems worth pointing out that the doctor who treated Dorneanu, the head of the USLA intervention brigade, at Piata Maria, and was involved in altercations with protesters, appeared to the doctor as “having been drugged.”

¹⁴⁷ As we saw, the anonymous USLA recruit referred to “the masked ones” shooting in Timisoara. Although the Army clearly did fire on and kill many demonstrators in Timisoara, and the notion of unknown “phantoms in black” being responsible for the carnage is a useful alibi, I don’t believe things are so simple—given the actions of those in “combinezoane negre” across the country, as discussed in detail earlier. In early 2006 at the “Timisoara trial” against most notably generals Stanculescu and Chitac, former Army Colonel Dumitru Daescu could not identify those who fired in December 1989, but declared “fire was opened by some men dressed in *combinezoane negre*” (“Noi martori in procesul Revolutiei de la Timisoara,” *Romania Libera*, 16 March 2006, online edition), while Army officer Gheorghe Ciubotariu stated “they fired shoulder strapped machine guns in front of the Cathedral, first toward the roof then in the demonstrators...those who fired were civilians and people in *combinezoane negre* from the Interior Ministry.” (I.D., “General Stanculescu se apara cu amanari si absente,” *Gandul*, 19 January 2006, online edition).

¹⁴⁸ Laurian Ieremeiov, “Lista securistilor si militienilor care au tras la Timisoara,” *Ziua*, 20 July 1998, online edition. To this, it is interesting and pertinent to add the following information. In 1991, Grid

Modorcea went to interview the priests of Timisoara's Orthodox Cathedral. Sorin Leia, age 22, was shot during a demonstration on the steps of the Cathedral on the evening of 18 December 1989. Father Ioan Botau related the following: "...Sorin Leia pulled a flag out and began singing 'Awake Romanians!' At 5:15 pm he was shot by a lunetist and killed. The crowd then fled and scattered and there was no more shooting. They brought this young person who had been shot inside the church and put a candle in his hand. He had been hit by the bullet in his upper torso and had not died on the spot. Father Mituga came out and called the ambulance. But the youngster was already dead. There was a pool of blood around him...Who shot people in Timisoara?...The Army didn't shoot. Camouflaged securisti shot and today they have made them into heroes!...Until when did they shoot?...They shot on Christmas day, all the way up until 29 December" (Grid Modorcea, "Dumnezeu citat ca martor in procesul de la Timisoara," *Expres Magazin*, 1991.) The late Iosif Costinas wrote in that same year that "a former Securitate officer, currently employed by the SRI, recently called two neighbors to repair a pipe in the bathroom. He got drunk and told them: 'on 17 December I shot from the Cathedral's [bell-]tower. I also shot later. And now, if I wish, I can shoot.' The two told the story but didn't want their names published." (related in Laura Ganea, "La Timisoara se mai trage inca," *Tinerama*, no. 77 (July 1991), p. 3.)

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in M.P., "'Revolutia de la Iasi trebuie legitimata'," *Evenimentul*, 15 December 2003, online edition. "Lunetisti" were spotted on the first and second floors of hotels surrounding the square where the demonstration was to take place—those rooms apparently occupied by participants of the "Dinamoviada" martial arts festival from the Interior Ministry, see Vasile Iancu, "Sa nu uitam!," *Romania Libera*, 14 December 1990, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ A.A., "Un fost ofiter de Securitate acuza Armata de crimele din decembrie '89," *Ziua*, 16 January 2001, online edition. A soldier from the Someseni unit, Gheorghe Timis, spoke about what happened in a different square in Cluj, Piata Marasti, as follows: "...it was not possible that no one would die, because there was shooting from the balconies and blocs by Securitate cadre. When I heard the first use of a weapon, I recognized, from the whistle, that it wasn't a caliber that we had in our arsenal. After this I saw a man on the asphalt, who had a hole in the top of his head, a sign that he had been shot from above, from the buildings, and not by the soldiers, as is always maintained," A.A., "In procesul Cluj '89, militarii pun mortii pe seama Securitatii," *Ziua*, 2001, online edition.

¹⁵¹ Siani-Davies, 2005, p. 152, fn. no. 32.

¹⁵² Doris Mironescu, "Revolutia româna, asa cum (probabil) a fost," *Timpul* no. 1 (January 2006), at <http://www.romaniaculturala.ro>.

¹⁵³ Serban Sandulescu, *Lovitura de Stat a Confiscat Revolutia Romana* (Bucharest: Omega, 1996), p. 214. Sandulescu's book was marketed and printed by Sorin Rosca Stanescu's Ziua press. Rosca Stanescu was a former USLA informer between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. Who was Sandulescu's chief counselor on these matters? Stefan Radoi, a former USLA officer in the early 1980s! These are the type of people who, of course, believe the passengers were DIA and not USLA! See my discussion of this whole fiasco in "The Securitate Roots of a Modern Romanian Fairy Tale," RFE "East European Perspectives" 4-6/2002, online.

¹⁵⁴ See Dinu's testimony in Sandulescu, *Lovitura de Stat*, p. 220. Also see the claims of another senior DIA officer Remus Ghergulescu in *Jurnalul National*, March 2004, online edition.

¹⁵⁵ Speaking even more broadly, Army parachutists (whether from Buzau, Caracal, Campia Turzii, or Boteni) were in Timisoara, Caransebes, and Television, Piata Palatului and the Otopeni Airport in Bucharest during the December events, but that clearly leaves many places where there were "terrorist actions"—including Sibiu—without them, decreasing their likelihood as plausible suspects. See Catalin Tintareanu, "Sarbatoare la Scoala de Aplicatie pentru Parasutisti 'General Grigore Bastan,'" *Opinia (Buzau)*, 10 June 2005, online edition.

¹⁵⁶ Nicu Silvestru, "Cine a ordonat sa se traga la Sibiu?" *Baricada*, no. 45, 1990, p.5.

¹⁵⁷ Emil Munteanu, "Postelnicu a vorbit neintrebat," *Romania Libera*, 30 January 1990, p. 1

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Nicu Ceausescu in *Zig-Zag*, no. 20, 21-27 August 1990.

¹⁵⁹ *Adevarul*, 29 August 1990. Also, Romanescu with Badea "U.S.L.A, Bula Moise..." 1991.

¹⁶⁰ "Virgil Magureanu sustine ca revolta din 1989 a fost sprijinita din interiorul sistemului," *Gardianul*, 12 November 2005, online edition.

¹⁶¹ Lt. Col. Aurel Dragomir, interview by Colonel Dragos Dragoi, "Sub tirul incrucisat al acuzatiilor (II)," *Armata Poporului*, no. 46 (November 1990), p. 3. Remus Ghergulescu specified USLA appearance as follows: "Over their black jumpsuits ('combinezoanele negre') in which they were dressed they had kaki vests. This was normal. They were equipped with the jumpsuits as "war gear," while the vests were "city

wear.” (Colonel Remus Ghergulescu, interview with Razvan Belciuganu, “Teroristii au iesit din haos,” Jurnalul National, 29 November 2004, online edition.)

¹⁶² See *Evenimentul Zilei*, 25 November 1992, p. 3.

¹⁶³ Romulus Cristea, “Huliganii astia trebuie anihilati,” *Romania Libera*, 28 March 2006, online edition.

¹⁶⁴ Petre Mihai Bacanu, “Au evacuat materiale...stropite cu sange,” *Romania Libera*, 28 December 1993, p. 10. As I have noted elsewhere, the revelations were not “new” and what they describe is remarkably similar to what Army recruits had described to *Armata Poporului* in the 17 January 1990 issue.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Romulus Cristescu, “Astia ne impusca, ca la Timisoara,” *Romania Libera*, 29 March 2006, online edition.

¹⁶⁶ Paul Stefanescu, *Istoria Serviciilor Secrete Romanesti* (Bucharest: Editura Divers Press, 1994), p. 288.

¹⁶⁷ Vasile Neagoe, *Expres*, 30 March-5 April 1990, p. 6.

¹⁶⁸ The Military Prosecutor’s report dated 4 June 1990 is reproduced in Mircea Bunea, *Praf in Ochi: Procesul celor 24-1-2* (Bucharest: Editura Scripta, 1994), quote found on p. 88.

¹⁶⁹ Victor Radulescu, “Excursii prin Contul Libertatea,” *Expres*, no. 11 (August 1990), p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ Dan Badea, “Securitatea—un joc in numele trandafirului,” *Expres*, 8-14 September 1992, p. 9.

¹⁷¹ In Simion Buia, jr. “Justitia ‘cocheteaza’ cu Puterea Politica?” *Romania Libera*, 13 June 1991, p. 2a, quoting Ioan Itu. The aforementioned Liviu Viorel-Craciun claimed he was told by a Securitate officer who claimed to have been on the roof when the helicopter departed that “they could not do anything against Ceausescu there because on the roof were ‘lunetisti.’” (Liviu Viorel-Craciun, “Ex-ministrul de interne CRACIUN LIVIU-VIOREL isi continua destainiurile,” *Expres*, no. 14-15 (1990).)

¹⁷² Colonel Gheorghe Badea, quoted in Domenico, p. 164, from an interview 3 June 1997.

¹⁷³ Constantin Paisie, interview by Marius Tuca, “Ceausestii au crezut ca o sa-I salveze cineva,” *Jurnalul National*, 18 March 2004, online edition. USLA training in the Baneasa area is mentioned in Stoian, 1993, pp. 85-85.

¹⁷⁴ I fully expect that when the “house of cards” about post-22 December finally crumbles—with the same sudden, thunderous crash of the Ceausescu regime itself—that as with the about-face on the USLA’s role in the pre-December 22 repression, it shall occur with little reference to the vats of ink spilled in years before denying such accusations—as if the previous articles had never been written... Winston Smith would recognize the method...

¹⁷⁵ The terminology of “myth” has been used (and arguably abused) in connection with December 1989, almost from the beginning. In English, Michael Shafir (1990 in *Radio Free Europe Research*) and Dennis Deletant (1994 in the *Slavonic and East European Review*) used it prominently. Vladimir Tismaneanu’s excellent exegesis about mythological or “magical” thinking in post-communist Romania and the former Eastern Europe is even entitled *Fantasies of Salvation*—a play on words undoubtedly meant to conjure up and inspired by Iliescu and Co.’s “National Salvation Front”... (all-too-conveniently, of course, those who believe in and advocate myths, according to Tismaneanu, are the opponents and competitors of liberal democratic intellectuals such as Tismaneanu). Monica Ciobanu’s review of Siani-Davies *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989* and Tom Gallagher’s *Modern Romania: Theft of a Nation* is entitled “The Myth Factory” (found at <http://www.tol.cz>).

¹⁷⁶ See Paul Mirel Bran, “Le parquet militaire promet un ‘rapport explosif’ sur les dessous de la revolution,” *Le Monde*, 18 May 2006, online edition.

¹⁷⁷ I suspect that as the Voinea myth grows and even garners some minimal international press coverage (a possible precursor can be seen in *Le Monde* June 2006), glib Romanian émigré academics in North America who have dabbled in the Revolution will be tempted to add their voices to the chorus. We have an idea of what they might say. Well-known writer and National Public Radio commentator Andrei Codrescu wrote last year:

“The new President (1996-2000)[Emil Constantinescu] did all he could to stop the thieves and tried also to bring to justice the murderers who created the fake revolution of 1989 in Romania, an event during which more than a thousand people were assassinated at random to give the world the illusion that an actual revolution was taking place. This is a long and sordid story, told in many books, including one by me [*The Hole in the Flag*], and unresolved to this day. The new President jailed some of the killers (most of them escaped) but none of them did any time when he was voted out of office and the bad old guy came back.”

(Andrei Codrescu, "Humor and Responsibility," *Jewish World Review* 26 May 2005 at <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0505/codrescu052305.php3> and in *The Penny Post Downtown Express* Volume 18, Number 1 (MAY 27—JUNE 2, 2005) at http://www.downtownexpress.com/de_107/thepennypost.html).

Vladimir Tismaneanu wrote with Peter Gross in the *Journal of Democracy* in April 2005:

"Many Romanians now hope that the *truth* about the postcommunist leadership and its policies and actions will be revealed... They expect that there will finally be a dignified and responsible effort to examine the nation's *true* communist and postcommunist histories, including the still unresolved questions regarding the December 1989 revolution... [such as] the secret military tribunal, and Ceausescu's execution. Who was shooting at the crowds? Who and what drove the evolution of events? Was this a series of premeditated events and if so, who was responsible?" (p. 150; emphases added).

If Tismaneanu's loaded and leading questions aren't enough to telegraph his understanding of the "truth," then his approval of Siani-Davies' grasp of "the myths and realities" of the Revolution and his pronouncement of Andrei Codrescu's *The Hole in the Flag* as "impeccably accurate [!!! ... such a characterization speaks volumes]" (*Jurnalul National*, February 2005) should add clarity.

In Prosecutor Voinea's conclusions Codrescu and Tismaneanu will no doubt find the discovery of the "truth" for which they have so long been waiting.

¹⁷⁸ The title of a recent article perhaps captures what it might look like: "Everyone is 'happy': The Revolution had no terrorists, while no one is guilty for the mineriada [of June 1990]," see "Toata lumea –I 'multumita': La Revolutie n-au fost teroristi, iar pentru mineriada nu sunt vinovati," *Cronica Romana*, 13 June 2006, online edition.

¹⁷⁹ The "prolonged applause" of a bygone era.