

Narrativity and Legitimation in the Discourse of the Communist Archives: Analysing the Files of “The Burning Bush Organization”

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Abstract: Our paper proposes to follow the history of the “Burning Bush”, a spiritual and cultural movement in the 1940s in Romania that had proposed the solution of spiritual resistance to communism through culture and faith. The analysis holds as key-concepts: discourse analysis, narrativity, semantics and hermeneutics, following the discourse of the Securitate’s archives with reference to the Burning Bush in terms of: - conflictual discourses: inquisitor vs. imprisoned; - motives and themes of the incriminatory discourse of the Securitate; - the existence of a master narrative of the archives.

Keywords: discourse analysis, archives of communism, religious repression

The Burning Bush movement at the Antim monastery in Bucharest entered collective memory through its cultural and spiritual ethos. In the 1940s in Bucharest, the Antim Monastery assembled a lay-monastic community of intellectuals and students around the values of the “old regime”. The “brave new world” of communism would not, however, grant existence to such “mystical” and “retrograde” forms of manifestation. During the 1958 wave of communist repression, most of the members of the Burning Bush group were arrested and sentenced for “conspiracy against the social order”.

Starting from the consequences of the linguistic turn in history, namely the influence of the author on the text, our working hypothesis is the existence of a discourse about the Burning Bush, unfolding onto three directions: the “memory” of the archives, historiography and individual memory. These, in turn, contribute to contouring a public memory of the Burning Bush phenomenon.

The present paper proposes the analysis of the characteristics and elements within the discourse of the communist archives through the means of

discourse analysis, historical semantics, as well as the concepts of narrativity and representation.

The stake of this research is to illustrate how the theoretical concepts above may represent an instrument for the interpretation of communist archives through a discursive deconstruction that would simultaneously allow for the integration of the historical context that produced the discourse.

Starting from Dominique Maingueneau's researches on discourse, we assume that the significance of the discourse cannot be isolated solely within either of the levels of vocabulary, themes, intertextuality or instances of enunciation, but it is disseminated throughout the different plans of the discourse¹. Therefore, one can no longer apply the distinction between "surface" and "in-depth" reading, and neither of the plans are privileged, but are "integrated at the same time, both in the order of the sentence and of the enunciation"², which calls for a dynamic approach.

1. A History of the Burning Bush

"The Burning Bush of the Mother of God" Association represented a community of intellectuals and monastical clergy coagulated around the Antim monastery in Bucharest. Its members, having come from the spheres of journalism, literature, poetry, religion, art, music and even mathematics, transposed the object of their profession into Christianity, succeeding in outlining landmarks for a more profound experience of the Christian faith. These reasons were considered enough of a danger to cause incarceration for a number of 15 participants to the Burning Bush - among them, the spiritual and intellectual elite.

The birth of the Burning Bush group occurred, on one hand, as "a result of friendship and personal long-established relations on the road of common spiritual searches in the cultural context of the epoch: a crossroads of destinies and aspirations"³; on the other hand, it was born as a reply to the acute advance of atheistic materialism and its propaganda⁴.

Among those who actively took part in the activities at Antim monastery were Sandu Tudor⁵, Alexandru Mironescu⁶, Benedict Ghiuș⁷, Sofian Boghiu,

¹ Marga 2003: 97.

² *Ibid.*

³ Șerban Mironescu 2008: 61.

⁴ Nicolau 1992: 34.

⁵ Birth name Alexandru Teodorescu, writer, publicist, owner of the newspaper „The Faith” during the interwar years. He became a monk at Antim under the name „Brother Agathon”, was later on ordained into priesthood (Hieromonk Agathon) and afterwards received the great skeme (Hieroskemamonk Daniil). He was the main catalyst of the Burning Bush.

⁶ Scientist, chemist, philosopher.

⁷ Archimandrite and theologian, confessor of many of the Burning Bush members.

Roman Braga⁸, Felix Dubneac⁹, Adrian Făgețeanu, Vasile Voiculescu¹⁰, Constantin Joja¹¹, André Scrima, archimandrites Vasile¹² și Haralambie Vasilache¹³, Anton Dumitriu¹⁴, Alexandru Elian, Paul Sterian, Petre Manoliu, Ion Marin Sadoveanu¹⁵, Olga Greceanu¹⁶, Mihai Rădulescu¹⁷, Nicolae Bordașiu¹⁸ and others. A form of legal constitution took place in 1946¹⁹, but in 1948 the association was disbanded and their meetings banned.

Their activity was in essence a spiritual one; the historical context – the transition years marked by the rising aggression of communism and their approach – and intertwining of spirituality and culture centred around the Prayer of the Heart (also known as the unceasing prayer or The Jesus Prayer²⁰); their purpose was, as stated: “for a deeper search and experience of Christian dogma and faith”²¹. Up until 1948, they held public lectures every Sunday in the library of the Antim monastery, displaying a range of mystic-apologetic themes, such as “Hesychasm”, “Jesus – Incarnation of the Logos”, “The original sin”, “The prayer of the heart”, as well as portraits of the great mystics of the Philokalia etc²².

The Antim experience was referred to as a “living conviviality” (André Scrima) between laic and monasticism – a “lay-monastical community” where intellectuals contacted the ethos of orthodox Christianity through cultural effervescence shaped into a cultural-spiritual profile.

Their activity was, however, in the attention of the Securitate²³. The first informative notes concerning their meetings date back to the Antim reunions; after 1955, close reunions used to take place at the Mironescu family home, where hieroskemamonk Daniil met with young students whose spiritual guiding and intellectual formation he was in charge of. The informative tracking²⁴ of the group precedes their 1958 arrest.

The Burning Bush group holds an extensive record of “memory” in the archives of the Securitate, files from which we intent to explore some fragments.

⁸ Theology student, later on archimandrite.

⁹ Theology student and monk, later on archimandrite.

¹⁰ Poet and medical doctor.

¹¹ Architect.

¹² Abbot at Antim monastery.

¹³ Monk at Antim, later on at Pocrov Skete.

¹⁴ Mathematician.

¹⁵ Writer.

¹⁶ Painter and writer.

¹⁷ Student in Letters.

¹⁸ Theology student, later on priest.

¹⁹ Daniil 1996: 92.

²⁰ “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner.”

²¹ Daniil 1996: 92. The same phrase is quoted by the archive documents. ACNSAS, DGSS Fund, file no. 213/1949, p. 114.

²² Daniil 1996: 92.

²³ Nicolau 1992: 36.

²⁴ Illustrated by the informative group file at ACNSAS, Informative Fund, file no. 2214, 7 vols.

2. *The Archives. Instances of Enunciation and Types of Discourse*

Approaching the archives of the Securitate from the perspective of discourse analysis imposes a global reading of the archive, which would also take into consideration aspects of linguistics and history.

The activity of the Securitate – as proved by the numerous archives – had fulfilled the purpose of the communist authority in eliminating any activities incompatible to the new state order. The procrustean frame of ideology led, however, to a malformation of reality and its instrumentalization through the means of discourse, such as to justify the repression against society.

Our analysis proposes to deconstruct the discourse of the archives in order to show precisely how this instrumentalization worked. Discourse analysis will connect the organization of the text to the components of enunciation and the specificities of the archive²⁵, and the analysis of ideological discourse will illustrate the way in which ideology serves to rationally legitimate authority²⁶.

Firstly, the analysis of the rapport between the author of the discourse and what he stated (“or meant to state, or unwittingly stated”²⁷) must answer to a series of questions such as: *Who is speaking?* (Who has the authority to produce the certain enunciation?), *What is the status of the speaker?* (from which derive a series of economical, legal and ideological rapports) and *Which are the institutional, but also textual settings (forms) of the discourse?*²⁸.

In the relation between discourse and archive, Dominique Maingueneau reasserted the importance of places and positions of the enunciation and co-enunciation. Generally speaking, institutions ensure the setting scene (both in social practice and in enunciation). On one hand, the instance of enunciation offers the enunciator with certain legitimacy, institutionally connected to that place; on the other hand, it obliges the enunciator to follow the rules of that particular institution²⁹. The discourse of the political police archives individualizes itself firstly through the instances of enunciation and through the circumstances of its genesis.

By nature, any discourse confers a certain status to the enunciator and the recipient of the discourse, inasmuch as what is said is legitimate³⁰. This becomes so much more significant since the *institution that produced the archive is a component of the repressive apparatus*. Its purpose of annihilating any form of political opposition automatically places it within: a) a forceful position (since it is part of the repressive apparatus); b) an ideological stance (since it is an ideological vehicle of the communist regime); c) a position of legitimacy (since its existence legitimates itself precisely through the tracking, identifi-

²⁵ Following the model suggested at Marga 2003: 274.

²⁶ Marga 2003: 455.

²⁷ After a Michel Foucault quote.

²⁸ Marga 2003: 329.

²⁹ Marga 2003: 326-328.

³⁰ Marga 2003: 99-100.

cation, arrest and incarceration of “dangerous elements”, “the class enemy”, “conspirators against the social order”).

Moreover, the ideological instance – the Securitate – actively contributes to the reproduction of social rapports through the interpellation of the subject (“the class enemy”) as an ideological one. This means that both instances are placed within the two opposed social classes³¹. The reproduction of the social rapports is concretely realized by means of “ideological state apparatuses”. Thusly conceived, ideology gains a “material existence”, and discourse becomes one of its ways of expression³². (Michel Pêcheux)

As to the recipient of the discourse, we are taking into account the fact that the archived files had an internal, closed circuit (with the exception of the files in the Criminal Fund, which followed the course of political trials); however, the assimilation of the wooden language (“*langue du bois*”) within the discourse converts the message into a nearly public one, within an alteration of reality. Reading the interrogation records produced during the investigation, one is left with the impression that one is observing a trial as an uncomfortable spectator. “The class enemy” must be exposed, and its counter-revolutionary activity must be revealed in front of an audience (be it absent). For these reasons, we assume that the recipient/ receiver of the discourse is equally the Securitate (within a repressive recurrence), which legitimates itself, at the same time, in front of an audience (be it absent)³³. In the end, convicting class enemies is an inheritance of the regime, passed on to posterity.

The forms of the discourse differ according to the type of document taken into account; information concerning the arrest, detention and post-detention period of “class enemies” are classified in terms of archival funds/files: penal records (which contain documents from the criminal investigation of a convicted group of prisoners), the informative tracking records (either individual or group tracking)³⁴, records of informants³⁵, case records (a documentary archival fund that reunites materials on a certain theme).

³¹ Within the master narrative proposed by Marxism.

³² Marga 2003: 120.

³³ This is a general observation which concerns the discourse globally. When analysing documents individually, secondary contexts, as well as influences on all types of discourse issue; among these: editing a document through the justification of a lower ranking officer towards his superior; the extent or conciseness of the informative notes depending on the personal motivation of the informant and so on.

³⁴ For instance, in the 1950s, an individual tracking record was supposed to contain the following documents: - the decision of opening the record; - biographical and confirmation data; - results of expertise; - plans of activity for the informative action; - informative and investigation material; - data obtained from the operative technique; - data obtained from investigation; - data obtained through the control of correspondence; - papers and syntheses concerning the informative action and other materials; - the confirmation signature. However, most of the archives do not contain all these documents. Chivu & Albu 2007: 39, 35.

³⁵ A record of an informer was supposed to contain, at the beginning of 1950s, the following documents: the detailed chart, a complete study of the agent, - the proposal for recruiting

A more detailed classification may illustrate true discursive “genres” and “species” within the archives of the Securitate: the interrogatory record, the confiscation of assets protocol, the informant commitment, the medical record, the informative note, the characterization note etc.

2. Analysing Interrogation Records Through Discourse Analysis

2.1. Enunciation

Although we have identified the Securitate as a general instance of enunciation, analysing interrogation records requires a few initial observations connected to the context of enunciation.

First, it concerns the fact that the documents were produced during the criminal investigations. The background behind the birth of the discourse is one of psychological pressure, tension, (possible) blackmail, physical aggression or any other method that guaranteed obtaining a confession/signature statement. On one hand, there is an information void, a (self-imposed?) silence (even on the part of the Securitate investigators – for instance, the conciseness of some long interrogatories)³⁶. Detention memorialists have long made known the various methods of interrogation, from violence to moral pressure, blackmail, threats or forged documents³⁷.

Who is editing the document? Who is leading the investigation? As to the professional formation of the Securitate officers, one of the initial problems was the semi-literacy of those employed by the Securitate³⁸, deficiencies that

the informer; his possible connections; - plan and place of recruiting (approved by the Chief of the particular Securitate Direction); - commitment of the informer, detailed autobiography, photo; - a list of relatives and acquaintances; - characterization of the informer; - the list of advantages or allowances given to the informer; - the list of the Securitate officers having worked with the informer; - characterizations originating from other informers; - results of other verification measures. Chivu & Albu 2007: 36.

³⁶ Sometimes even five or six hours of continuous interrogation are comprised within few lines on paper. Examples are numerous.

³⁷ The testimonials are confirmed by the archives. Thus, a classified 1967 document identified the “inappropriate methods” used by the Securitate investigators before 1964. Among these, there were:

1. The use of beating, prolonged underfeeding and torture, with the purpose of obtaining incriminating statements.
2. Applying moral pressure to constrain the prisoners into declaring what had been previously imposed to them.
3. Falsifying declarations given by the prisoners and using forged letters in order to obtain the prisoners’ admission of the accusations.
4. Editing declarations in the absence of the accused or the record of unreal answers, that the prisoners were forced into signing. Oprea 2008: 93-94.

³⁸ Only a small proportion of the students of the Securitate had graduated from high school. Oprea 2008: 75.

were counterbalanced later on through the instruction of cadres³⁹. The educational institutions of the Securitate had strongly politicized disciplines, based on a curriculum centred upon “military preparation and political culture, the essential assignment being the knowledge of the fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist theory and the issues posed by the building of socialism in our country, as well as the combat for translating the Party policy into everyday life...”⁴⁰.

With regard to the religious issue, the agents of the Securitate dealing with cults and religions were supposed to detain knowledge on various religious doctrines, types of church organizations, the Party’s perspective on religion and the role of religions within society⁴¹ and, last but not least, the content of the atheist doctrine⁴². Scientific knowledge was marked by the idea that “through religion, the imperialist bourgeoisie tries to maintain the masses in obscurantism in order to exploit them properly”⁴³.

The context of enunciating the interrogation documents is therefore connected to the author of the master narrative (namely the investigative officer) and its theoretical and ideological formation, to the stances of the two dialogical voices (the accuser and the accused), as well as to the external constraints and the pressure created upon the prisoner.

2.2. Discourses in Conflict⁴⁴

Any discourse is a fundamentally dialogical one⁴⁵, irrespective of its external aspect, in the sense that it addresses a real or fictitious recipient⁴⁶.

The term “conflict” presumes two sides, two persons, two groups etc., while “conflictual discourse” refers to the discourse of either of the opposed sides, being addressed to an adversary who may, in turn, respond by generating another conflictual discourse⁴⁷.

The discourses within an interrogation record are conflictual by nature of the conditions which generated the discourse: the voice of an accuser and the voice of an accused.

The object of the conflictual discourse is the Other (who needs not be informed, as in the case of a non-conflictual discourse), and his discourse must

³⁹ Oprea 2008: 75.

⁴⁰ Oprea 2008: 75.

⁴¹ An example of study material is represented by a paper lesson compiled by the Securitate, dated January 1st 1951, concerning the Orthodox Church and the other historical religions. Păiușan & Ciuceanu 2001: 260-267.

⁴² Enache 2009: 168.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ We followed the methodological directions indicated by Lemke 2005: 31-47 and Van Dijk 1995: 135-161.

⁴⁵ In the view of Mikhail Bakhtin.

⁴⁶ Marga 2003: 121.

⁴⁷ Marga 2003: 289.

be disqualified, rejected, denied⁴⁸. The two discourses interact semantically, inasmuch as “each introduces the Other (l’Autre) within his confinement, by translating his enunciations into categories of identity (Même) and has nothing to do with this Other apart from the “simulacrum” that is built about him”⁴⁹. (D. Maingueneau).

Regarding lexical levels, two registers may be identified: a positive and a negative one. The enunciations of the Other are translated into categories of own’s negative register. In other words, these enunciations of the Other are understood only “within the semantic confinement of the interpreter. The Other’s discourse can only be contacted through this pre-built “simulacrum”⁵⁰.

The semantic differences of the discourse define alterity:

The uniformity of the wooden language, which before the usurpation of power used to signify the communion around a central vision, signifies afterwards obedience towards the same power. Linguistic conformity is indeed the main test of allegiance of the governable to the governor. Heteroglossia is the first sign of rebellion⁵¹.

Therefore, we have the confrontation of two discourses that pertain to ideologically opposed sides: the investigator (the repressive apparatus) and the investigated (the class enemy). The differences between the two discourses stand out firstly through the semantics of ideology – the one that confers negative connotations to the adversary, to the opponent⁵² (the outgroup) and positive to the belonging group (ingroup). Lexical structures help differentiate between discourses through the presence/absence of wooden language.

From this point of view, the interrogation records contain two types of situations:

A. One in which the “voice” of the accused distinguishes clearly from that of the accuser through a different vocabulary – mostly characterized by the absence of wooden language.

In this situation, the two authors of discourse differentiate themselves clearly, not only semantically but also by the content of the answers given during the investigation. Sometimes, the prisoner refuses any collaboration with the investigation officer, and the truth/lie polarization becomes very clear. We offer as example a couple of excerpts from interrogatory files from the investigation of hieroskemamonk Daniel:

- What kind of hostile activity did you lead against the popular democrat regime in People’s Republic of Romania?

⁴⁸ Marga 2003: 290.

⁴⁹ Marga 2003: 97.

⁵⁰ Marga 2003: 98.

⁵¹ Besançon 2007: 357.

⁵² Van Dijk 1995: 143.

- I did not lead any activity against the popular democrat regime in People's Republic of Romania.
- Your answer does not correspond to reality. The investigation requires you declare the truth.
- I am only declaring the truth. I did not lead any subversive activity against the popular democrat regime in People's Republic of Romania.
- This is not true! The investigation knows that along with your accomplices you have developed activity against popular democrat regime in P.R.R.
- I maintain my former answer.
- The investigation repeats the above question and asks you to declare the hostile activity you have led against the state order in P.R.R.
- I did not lead any hostile activity against the popular democrat regime in P.R.R.⁵³

B. Another situation, where the “voice” of the inquisitor absorbs the voice of the accused, so much that the interrogation file gains strong narrative accents and a prevalence of ideological discourse. In this case, one may apply the observation that conflictual discourse, even when it belongs solely to an individual, inevitably comprises the discourse of the opponent: when we are in conflict with someone, we speak precisely about that “someone” in our own discourse⁵⁴.

In this second case, the dialogue between the inquisitor and the prisoner seems to be narrated through an ideological lens: questions and answers follow fluently, almost narratively, and – what is most interesting – the discourse of the imprisoned also includes semantic structures of the wooden language (for instance, the recurrent phrase “mystical-hostile education”).

Since it is not the case for re-education, we may presume – rather realistically – that these types of interrogation protocols were written beforehand based on the information collected by the Securitate and that the sole contribution of the prisoner within the document would have been his signature. This would also be proved by the fixed phrases and rigid enunciation.

Some suggestive examples indicate times when the debut of the reply gets to repeat the final words of a question, in a complete schoolboy-ish manner:

- Do you know someone by the name of Mironescu Alexandru?
- Yes, I do know someone by the name of Mironescu Alexandru.
- When and in what circumstances did you meet Mironescu Alexandru?
- I met Mironescu Alexandru during 1933-1935 when we initiated “The Faith” newspaper⁵⁵.

Another record of interrogation, following a couple of weeks' time:

⁵³ ACNSAS, Penal Fund, file no. 202, vol. 1, pp. 13 (v), 14.

⁵⁴ Marga 2003: 289.

⁵⁵ Interrogatory taken from hieroskemamonk Daniel, July 19th 1958. ACNSAS, Penal Fund, file no. 202, vol. 1, p. 20.

- After some while, after my ordination as abbot at Rarău Skete, I started coming to Bucharest, at which point *I resumed contact with Mironescu Alexandru*⁵⁶.
- *When did you resume contact with Mironescu Alexandru?*
- *I resumed contact with Mironescu Alexandru* at the beginning of 1955, when I proposed to organize a group of former members of the “Burning Bush” association to meet with at Mironescu Alexandru’s home⁵⁷.

The next example illustrates a complete absorption of the discourse belonging to the prisoner – by the investigator; the prisoner’s discourse not only receives ideological epithets attached, but also extensive excerpts of Marxist semantics:

- With what purpose did you develop this activity against communism and against the working class?
- I developed this activity against communism with the purpose of deflecting workers and communists in Romania from their combat, as well as with the purpose of influencing them to break apart from the communist ideas. I did this in order to eventually stop the Romanian communist and proletarian movement, who, by following the lead of the USSR, had begun to develop an increasing animus. This is the purpose with which I have spread, through my articles, the combat against communism. I admit that this activity of mine was of nature of influencing the communist and proletarian movement in Romania, but this was precisely the purpose I had been following; namely, to prevent the spreading of the communist ideas in Romania, having known that they were contrary to the interests of the bourgeois regime from that time and implicitly contrary to my own interests, since I detained a rather good social status within the same regime⁵⁸.

Other occasions depict the reply of the prisoners tending to an exaggerated formalism, an entirely artificial one:

- What kind of hostile activity did you lead against the popular democrat order in Romanian People’s Republic?
- Another aspect of the hostile activity led by me was also our concern with the mystical-hostile education of a group of students...⁵⁹.

⁵⁶ Italics belong to us.

⁵⁷ ACNSAS, Penal Fund, file no. 202, vol. 1, p. 29 (v). Interrogatory from August 12th 1958.

⁵⁸ ACNSAS, Penal Fund, file no. 202, vol. 1, pp. 35 (v), 36.

⁵⁹ ACNSAS, Penal Fund, file no. 202, vol. 1, p. 30.

2.3. Narrativity and Argumentation

As we have fore-mentioned, the Securitate generates a discourse conditioned by its own nature. Within its attributions there were: the discovery and annihilation of the “terrorist subversive activity, nationalistic-chauvinistic activity, as well as other hostile activities led by the internal reaction”⁶⁰. The 3rd Direction within the institution was responsible for “the combat against terrorist actions, hostile and nationalist groups, *as well as against the reactionary activity of the clergy and sectarians*”⁶¹.

Within the 3rd Direction, Service IV performed the “work of discovering and annihilating hostile groups and elements that develop their activity of undermining the democrat regime in PRR under the activity of religions and sects”⁶², and Bureau I of this Service would concern itself with uncovering “the hostile activity developed by reactionary elements within the lines of orthodox clergy”⁶³.

These details gain significance since one of the hypotheses around the incriminating discourse of Securitate towards the Burning Bush is the accusation of “counter-revolutionary activity under the mask of orthodox religion”⁶⁴.

Sandu Tudor’s order of accusation indicates the official incrimination (and, in fact, the narrative) of the Securitate:

The criminal investigation records show that Teodorescu Alexandru, also known as Sandu Tudor, has led counter-revolutionary activity to the extent that, along with other accomplices of his, he initiated and organized a subversive group, where they developed activity directed against the popular democratic regime of PRR⁶⁵.

The conditions for a narration presume the existence of an event, its representation given by a narrator addressing a reader/audience, onto which a certain effect must be produced⁶⁶. The records of the “Burning Bush” group contain all these elements: the entire chronological re-enactment of the group’s activity (as a result of informative tracking and documents in the penal investigation) composes “the event plan of the reported facts”⁶⁷.

Apart from the coherence given by narrativity, argumentation represents one of the main factors of discursive cohesion, since it also is one of the

⁶⁰ Dobre 2006: 138.

⁶¹ Dobre 2006: 104.

⁶² Dobre 2006: 105.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ The elements noted as „hostile” by the Securitate included “all those who, under the mask of religion, proselytise (different cults and religions), meaning that they speculate upon the religious feelings of the citizens in order to influence them towards hostile, malicious actions against the regime (miracles, lectures with hostile, chauvinistic substrata etc.” Enache 2009: 171.

⁶⁵ ACNSAS, Penal Fund, file no. 202, vol. 1, f. 17.

⁶⁶ Marga 2003: 296.

⁶⁷ Marga 2003: 297.

constitutive networks of the discourse. It employs a global strategy determining a chain of arguments to obtain the adhesion of the audience/recipient to the enunciated statements. Argumentation operates on the audience/recipient by trying to change his beliefs “through the organization of the discourse itself”⁶⁸.

The argument that the members of the “Burning Bush” group are responsible for counter-revolutionary activity develops onto two arguable, but also instrumentalized, dimensions: “mystical, hostile education” passed on to students, as well as listening to “foreign imperialist” radio stations’ broadcasts along with “calumniously” commenting the political news. Since the two accusations are not enough for conviction, the following argumentation is added:

In 1946 (...) we set up the “Friends of the Burning Bush” Association, housed at the same monastery where its leader, Sandu Tudor, resided. In this way I managed to enter into relations of hostile activity against the regime along with a number of legionaries attracted to the association by Sandu Tudor, such as: Benedict Ghiuș, Sofian Boghiu, Braga Roman. Other legionaries, which I do not know by name, also took part in the association, but I think Sandu Tudor can [name them]. *Since the “Burning Bush” association was mostly composed of legionaries, and the mystical-hostile education being made within the association had enough features of the legionary education, such as: fortitude, mystical fanaticism and others, one may state that the activity of the association also had a legionary character*⁶⁹.

The addition of the “legionary” epithet is the one that transforms the “hostile” activity of the group into a counter-revolutionary one. The conviction of the group is thus starting to take shape.

3. Conclusions

The present paper explored the archives of the Securitate regarding the spiritual movement “The Burning Bush” through the methodology of discourse analysis. By analysing the way in which the conditions of discourse production (historical context, institutions, actors, and ideology) influenced the discourse of the Securitate with regards to the Burning Bush, we proposed a method of approaching the archives of Romanian communism.

From the analysis of the narrative and argumentative elements existent within the discourse of the archives, we inferred the method of instrumentalization applied by the Securitate in the case of the Burning Bush: an attitude of spiritual self-preservation (spiritual and intellectual resistance against atheism) was perceived as a threat towards the state order. This eventually made the Burning Bush group be convicted for “conspiracy against the social order”.

⁶⁸ Marga 2003: 276.

⁶⁹ Italics belong to us. ACNSAS, Penal Code, file no. 202, vol. 2, f. 158.

Ideology legitimated the communist authority, and authority institutionalized violent repression; the repressive apparatus is also ideological by nature. Therefore, in communism we are faced with the power-ideology-repression link and their aggression against society. Our interest originated in the language that mediated this relation and how it served to distort reality within the repression against clergy and intellectuals.

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