

## **The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of father Nicolae Grebenea**

Revd. Ionuț MANU\*

### **Abstract:**

In this material I tried to expose weights, harassing and perpetual surveillance the Orthodox clergy had to undergo, like the former political prisoners of the Romanian communist regime, starting with Priest Nicolae Grebenea. I wanted to capture – looking in N.C.S.S.A. (National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives) archives information from those offered by the papers written by Father Grebenea – how the Romanian security service, through repressive measures of criminal conduct taken by it throughout the entire surveillance process, through notes provided by informants under coverage, the Securitate's interference in public and private life of Father Nicolae; its interests and attempts to discredit the company and the practical methods used for the physical elimination of his person.

### **Keywords:**

life after detention of priest Nicolae Grebenea, informative surveillance, Securitate, repressive measures, moral compromise, eliminating with poisoning and / irradiance

Even if the clergy and orthodox laity, former political prisoners spent plenty of time in prison and many of them were no longer young, the Securitate has not hesitated to supervise them in the *free* land of Romanian's People Republic. Ever since they stepped as free men outside the prison or forced labour camps where they were being held, the secret police came with a verified plan to supervise all

---

\* Ionuț Manu, PhD Student of the "Andrei Șaguna" Orthodox Faculty of Theology, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Romania.

Revd. Ionuț Manu

their actions and activities - their purpose was either to prevent hostile actions against the communist regime or to spread fear and terror everywhere.

The first repression method after the detention which many of the clergy (former political prisoners) were confronted with was the temporary elimination from the staff of the Romanian Orthodox Church. This fact has two causes: first of all they were confronted with the hesitations of some hierarchs to put clerics back into their old position, because of their past or mostly because of the reprobations that came from the secret service. In this case many priests, in order to earn their living and support their families, needed to accept jobs that were not suitable for their education and their condition. They were often declared unschooled, paid less and humiliated because of the dishonorable labour they were compelled to do (for many details see the case of father Ioan Vladovici who was compelled after release from prison to work for six years as an inexperienced worker at a brick factory).

One of the clerics, that was a former political prisoner, was constantly followed, bothered and made to look wicked in the eyes of the people by the Securitate-that also killed him, was Father Deacon Nicolae Grebenea. The priest survived in the Romanian prison regime over 22 years and 6 months and although he was 59 when he got out of prison and he didn't represent a threat to the regime anymore, the secret service was constantly following his moves. Sometime after being relieved from detention, on December 1964, with God's mercy he was ordained<sup>1</sup> in Sibiu for one of the parishes from Alba Iulia villages<sup>2</sup>. Although he was quite isolated from the society of the time because he was serving in that area, the communist Security decided through *The Decision of Internal Affairs Ministry, Regional Autonomie Magyar Direction Mureș, Section of labour camp Târnăveni* from the 27<sup>th</sup> of september 1965 to open a verification and following file for him, under the conspiratorial name of GICU, and later DRUMEȘ. In the secret police's decision some biographic dates are briefly presented including the public activity of the priest and the reasons regarding the start of the process of following and verification, but also the tasks that needed to be accomplished in this process. In order to understand the way this mechanism worked, but also the phases of this process that was about the following of father Nicolae Grebenea ,we can deliver the text of this document :

---

<sup>1</sup> "There were not canonic hindrances for his ordination. So it has decided in a rush my ordination from deacon into priest, for earning my living. His Grace Bishop Teodor Scorobet made my ordination, in a restrained setting." in Priest Nicolae Grebenea, *Memories from darkness*, Ed. Scara, Bucharest, 2000, p.480.

<sup>2</sup> This is about the parish of Spini, with the subsidiary Sona, which sheltered 280 families situated on Târnavă Mică, placed 8 kilometers away from Blaj.

*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

“Called Nicolae Grebenea is born on 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1905 in Rășinari village, in Sibiu district, Brașov region, son of Dan and Stana, nationality and citizenship romanian, graduate from Theological Orthodox Institute of Sibiu, working as orthodox priest, residence in Sona, village Lunca Tîmavei. He is married, he has a child. In the past he was a part of a legionary organization, he was its’ secretary for Bacău county. From 1938 to 1939 he was arrested for legionnaire activity.

After the release he continued his legionnaire activity and then in 1942 was arrested again. He got 25 years of hard labour, from Martial Court of 21<sup>st</sup> division Infantry, through the sentence number 2421/27.05.1942, final punishment through the sentence number 1353/1945, that was given by Military Court of Cassation and Justice. He was released from detention on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1964, through the Decree 411/1964.

On 16<sup>th</sup> January 1965 he was preliminary verified and then it was established that he had lots of negative manifestations for the regime.

Thereby in the notes of “Marinescu Alexandru” we can see that Nicolae Grebenea was decided to have a peaceful life. When the agent discussed political themes with other priests, the subject was trying to avoid this subject.

From *Holom Dumitru’s* notes we can see that the priest had some hostile manifestations. Therefore, on 20<sup>th</sup> of August he declared that: *“The Constitution from our country it is only a facade for other states on the globe to convince them that we have rights too, but the reality is that here, in our country, the Constitution is only a procedure and our rights are not respected. But we will find out the decision after the convention, because our men are in touch with western countries, and after the convention we will find out on which side the politics swings, towards west or east.”*

Also on 28<sup>th</sup> of august c.y. the agent mentioned that when he discussed the war in Vietnam with Grebenea, that said: *“the war in Vietnam is a political war, and if the Americans would take off, they would lose one of the best strategic bases from South-East of Asia, moreover Americans are ashamed to take off. They would sign a peace treaty but they are scared, if it will not be respected, the communism will spread all over the Asia, and they are afraid that Chinese people-a numerous population, will spread like scab throughout Asia.”* He also said that he read 2 magazines, an English one and a French one, magazines which shaved map of American military bases. He also stated that the Romanian nation is not multiplying as much as the Hungarian nation from Regional Autonome Magyar Direction Mureș, which outnumbered the Romanians.

Grebenea told the agent that he should advise people to have more children in order to raise the number of Romanians, because someday the Hungarians will run a riot and they will ask for Ardeal back.

Revd. Ionuț Manu

On 17th August 1965 the agent „Moraru” was activated from Bacău. He provided the secret police with detailed notes regarding Grebenea’s political and moral beliefs.

From the notes that „Moraru” had taken, it was obvious to the regime that the priest was a threat and they decided to follow him and see :

If he was still in touch with former political prisoners or with others legionnaires.

With which of the legionnaires from village Lunca Târnavei was still in contact with and what they were talking about.

What indications does he give to Christians at church, during the service and outside of church, and in the commentaries he makes regarding the events that are occurring.

Taking into consideration all the above, we request your approval to open Nicolae Grebenea’s file of verification that will be verified because of his legionnaire problem.

Prime operative worker: Captain Suci Ioan [ comes his signature]

Allowed: Chief of Section District: Captain Grama Nicolae [comes his signature]”<sup>3</sup>

The automatic consequence was the triggering of a complex programme of surveillance and verification of Securitate aimed to the objective named GICU. In this regard, any visit conducted or received, any phone call, any occasional meeting on the street with a known or an unknown person needed to be written down and researched. Furthermore, any of father’s thoughts or intentions needed to be known and inspected by Securitate’s organs, who were always exaggerating the danger, and Grebenea was perceived as a dangerous enemy for the regime. That is why the Securitate’s Chief of District from Târnaveni send on 13th June 1967 clear directives to his subordinates ( Companion Captain Suci I.) regarding the guidance of the agents in order to track down Grebenea, he also threatened the agents when they couldn’t carry out their duties. They were sanctioned because their supposed negligence at work: “ with agents *Holom* and *Gligor*, which are working with the chief, you need to meet yourself, in person and then to guide them with the help of the indications given by Companion Captain Gidea from the notes of the file. The agent *Nicolaescu Gh.* that was recruited on 31<sup>st</sup> march 1967, he has very good possibilities of getting us informed, and he has not given us any dates since his recruitment. Get in contact with him urgently and give him tasks, as he, in the eyes

---

<sup>3</sup> National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives (N.C.S.S.A.), Informative Background, File number 235976, second volume, ff. 4-6, Securitate’s Decision regarding the opening of Nicolae Grebenea’s file of verification.

*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

of the priest, is a reliable man. If you will still neglect the subject I will need to discipline you with a punitive action [comes his signature]<sup>4</sup> .

One of the first informative notes about the priest was obtained by Securitate through his supervisors agents just three days after the opening of the verification file. Thereby the informant Chirilă Ioan was reporting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1965 that: “on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1965, the subject took part at a priests’ conference from Romanian Orthodox Deanery from Târnăveni. The conference was conducted by Prof. Corneliu Sârbu, the delegate of Orthodox Metropolis of Sibiu and was also the delagate for “Sir David” Cult’s Department.

The conference was hold by Grebenea, from Lunca Târnavei village, and its title was *New orientations in the pastoral study of priest*. The conference was well-documented, appreciated by all the priests and also by the delegate. After the end of the conference, priests had talked too, and they were bringing some examples from their parishes, better said how a priest can communicate in a better way with the followers from its parish, said Prof. Sârbu<sup>5</sup>. We can see from this note that the priest is followed step by step, at any public event he attended and especially at the events where he was invited to speak in front of the audience. It is very likely that the father figured out that he was followed ceaselessly when he was with his family, at the parish, or anywhere else, as we can understand from the things he said to archpriest Marcoviciu, found there to verify the parish, “ i am followed by authorities and even priest Teodorescu Adrian from Blaj warned me not to get in touch with them [here he is talking about his friends from detention] and not to discuss too much with the other priests as lots of them are agents...”<sup>6</sup>.

Although he knew that he was constantly followed by some Securitate agents, father Nicolae was still expressing his opinions regarding the communist party, its politics and Romanian People’s Republic. As time flew he become prudent when he was expressing his political views and sometimes he tried to find and even emphasize a positive part of the regime.

If the father took part in a meeting or public activity, the persons that were there were verified too and there was at least one report about the activity that

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. , f.102, reverse, Annotation of one of the Securitate’s Chief.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. , f.329, Note given by agent Chirilă Ioan on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1965.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. , f.288. The confirmation of the fact that in the Grebenea’s entourage two priests were agents of Securitate comes from the annotation made on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1965 by a superior of Securitate on one of the pages in his file he writes down: “Priest Grebenea Nicolae from Spini will be supervised for two years, period in which it will be establish: the position of the subject after the release from prison, what relationships does he has with other priests and if he communicate with the formers legionnaires from the village. He will be supervised by the agents from his village and with agents Chirilă I. and Marinescu , who are among the priests.” In N.C.S.S.A., Informative Background, file number 235976, second volume, f.367.

Revd. Ionuț Manu

has been developed. To emphasize this we give as an example the report that was made by the Council of State's Securitate, Inspectorate of County for Security from Sibiu from 18<sup>th</sup> July 1970 which said:

“We established that Nicolae Grebenea has been in Sibiu many times in order to organize the 40 years anniversary of graduating the Faculty of Theology. He was in contact with: the rector of the Theological Institute from Sibiu named Todoran Isidor, Dumitru Călin and others. The anniversary was on 4/5<sup>th</sup> July 1970, and there were their wives too. They had talked about the happy event and about their families, nothing political related. We do not have any other dates until present times.”<sup>7</sup>

When the father wanted or needed to travel to another village, the Securitate always secured the place in order to survey his moves. This theory is certified by the analysis notes made by Securitate with the number 00155, on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1978, but also by the report made by the Securitate's Chief of District, Captain Grama Nicolae and sent to Regional Autonomie Magyar Direction Mureș, Third Service. Although the analysing note is made after the report, the first one says: „in the analyzed period the subject stayed 45 days with his daughter at Iași, and after that he came back in Piatra Neamț. After 4 days he went to visit his relatives and friends from counties Vâlcea, Sibiu and Iași. We got in contact with the authorities in order to supervise him and we found out what persons he wanted to visit.”<sup>8</sup> In contrast to this the report said that : „on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1967, Grebenea Nicolae, working as a priest, will attend to a course<sup>9</sup> for 45 days, in Curtea de Argeș.

He is born on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1905 in Rășinari village, in Sibiu district, Brașov region, son of Dan and Stana, he is a orthodox priest and he works in village Lunca Tîrnavei, village Sona, district Tîrnăveni.

We mention that the subject is tracked by us and that is why we ask you to watch him for the period he will take classes in Curtea de Argeș<sup>10</sup>”.

We can observe that the surveillance of Grebenea was very strict. If he was going outside the village or the county, the agents were waiting for him there, or were tracking him. We can see in the notes that the number of agents that were following him and those who were in his entourage is quite big. There were **in-**

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., f.10, Decision of Inspectorate of Securitate from Sibiu to Inspectorate of Securitate from Alba from 18<sup>th</sup> July 1970.

<sup>8</sup> N.C.S.S.A, Informative Background, file number 207204, second volume, f.128.

<sup>9</sup> It is about the priestly courses organized in that year in Curtea de Argeș where will be lots of priests.

<sup>10</sup> N.C.S.S.A, Informative Background, file number 235976, second volume, f.45.

*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

**formants** in his family- as he confessed<sup>11</sup>, amongst the villagers from the parishes where he was priest<sup>12</sup>, among the former political prisoners and after retirement amongst the neighbors from his house<sup>13</sup>. It is observed with wonder that there were people working for the Securitate in his hometown, Rășinari, others in Sibiu, Iași, Alba, Bacău. Almost anywhere father Grebenea wanted to go he was followed and observed and then the notes were sent to the Securitate.<sup>14</sup>

The Securitate was not only satisfied with his past, that was found legionary by them, but also with his devotion when it comes to serving the Orthodox Church and spreading the biblical word. His Holiness was considered dangerous by the Securitate's organs because he was serving the truth, and not the mean interests of the party. Worrying in the eyes of the party were also the next facts. The father was always on the move, in the country, where he was often remarked by his general grounding and the piece of advice he gave to those who wanted it, was permanently occupied with the making of different writings, especially in the form of sermons, and he was still in touch with his old friends from the detention and before it.<sup>15</sup>

The supervisory action of Grebenea was not just the reporting through informants, it was also through **technical stakeout**<sup>16</sup>. According to a note from the Report of Security Inspectorate of Alba County addressed to First Service, the father was steaked out on 9th September 1969 from 8:30 am to 9:35 pm. Regarding the activity that followed, the rapport says:

<sup>11</sup> Priest Nicolae Grebenea, *op.cit.*, pp.504-505.

<sup>12</sup> From his confession he had identified much of his friends and villagers that were informants. He only recalls the two singers, from the time he spent in Alba, at parish, that were following him. However the presence of this informants did not scare him. He was a tireless and fearless priest when he was serving the church: "this would not stopping me from predicating the way it should be done, without excess, but also without worrying that I could upset the Securitate. I was the servant of God and I craved to remain His servant, His laborer and not peoples'. I always have the words of grand Paul the apostle: <<You were redeemed with a big price, through Christ's blood; do not be slaves for other humans>> (I. Corinthian 1,6 and 7,2-3)" in Priest Nicolae Grebenea *op.cit.*, p.496

<sup>13</sup> The informer known as IRIMESCU was "retired, properly trained and neighbor" with father Nicolae Grebenea, in N.C.S.S.A, Informative Background, file number 207204, second volume, f.129.

<sup>14</sup> From the Informative Notes that were in State's Archives we can find out that they were trained and guided to discuss in detail with the subject about his family, the way he get used to living in the parish, the state of the parish and the people that are active in the church, the manner he appreciate the measures taken by the party and not last his relation with the local police.

<sup>15</sup> N.C.S.S.A, Informative Background, file number 207204, second volume, f.128.

<sup>16</sup> Supervision through *technical stakeout* it was a pretty common technique for Securitate's staff. Through adequate Bureau "D", they were using specialized equipment in order to stalk the subjects, that were from lower or upper clergy. According to the dates of N.C.S.S.A, even the Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan of Ardeal was often supervised through technical stakeout. For many details see N.C.S.S.A, Informative Background, file number 005555, first volume, f. 25.

Revd. Ionuț Manu

„At 9:10 am GICA subject was getting out from the bus Târgu Mureș-Deva from the Alba Iulia station bus, carrying a suitcase. From there he was invited to the Securitate Inspectorate from Alba Iulia. He entered at 9:18 am. At 11 am GICA walked out by foot from the Securitate Inspectorate from Alba Iulia and went on the street Avram Iancu, Calea Moșilor. He entered the building number 4 at 11:05 am. After a minute GICA left in a hurry on Calea Moșilor, he crossed the street to the park and continued his walk on Unirii street, Ecaterina Varga and he entered at 11:30 am in the state's notary of Alba County. At 12:00 pm walked out from notary and went on Ecaterina Varga Street, Unirii, boulevard Horia, Calea Moșilor. At 12:20 pm he entered the building with the number 43. From this address GICA left at 12:45 pm on Calea Moșilor street and entered at 1:05 pm a building number 4.

At 1:15 pm he left with a Wartburg, with the registration number 1-AB-1053 with a man (alias Gogu) and a female driver (alias Geta). They went on Calea Moșilor, 1st of May Square, Ardealului Street, Republicii, driveway Alba Iulia- Sebeș.

They entered in Sebeș at 1:30, to Gaterului Street and pulled out in front of the building numbered 91. GICA and Gogu got out and entered the building at 1:35 pm. After five minutes they all left on Gaterului Street, Lenin Street, driveway Sebeș-Sibiu and at 2:25 entered in Siliște village. They stopped the car in the center of the village where they got out of it. GICA went down many streets to Gh. Doja street where he entered in the building numbered 898 at 2:35 pm. After splitting up, Gogu and Geta went with the car in Siliște to another address.

At 6:10 pm GICA went from Siliște village to driveway Siliște-Sebeș with the same car with Gogu and Geta. They entered in Sebeș at 7:00 pm, parked their car near Sebeș's service. GICA and Gogu went out to Ștefan cel Mare Street and entered in a building number 158 (metal workroom) at 7:05 pm.

At 7:25 GICA and Gogu went back to their car and continued their way on lots of streets and finally stopped in Av. Gheorge Olteanu Street, in front of TB Hospital of Sebeș. He entered the hospital, stayed there for five minutes and left back to the car and went on driveway Sebeș-Alba Iulia.

At 8:00 pm they stopped at a gas station named PECO in Alba Iulia where they put gas in the tank and then went to Ardealului Street, through 1st of May Square, 30 Decembrie, Mihai Eminescu and other streets. They reached Iancului Street, stopped the car and they all went to the building number 5 at 8:20 pm. At 9:30 they all left from here, went on many streets with the car and stopped on Calea Moșilor, in front of building number 4. GICA and Gogu got off and entered the building at 9:35 pm while Geta parked the car in the yard of the building.



*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

The links Gogu and Geta are living in Calea Moșilor, number 4, where GICA lived temporarily owning the car Wartburg with the registration number 1-AB-1053. The steakout goes on. Chief of Section Lt. Col. Cioara Ioan [comes his signature]<sup>17</sup>.

The surveillance of father Grebenea was also materialized through the insertion in his home of some **microphones** and a **latest generation equipment** for that time, that was put in there at the time he had his telephone installed. After nine years of staying in Ardeal- since his daughter moved to Iași and she needed the family near her- the father and his family decided to make a transfer request in the Metropolis of Moldova. After some barriers the transfer was accepted and he was named priest in Vlădiceni parish, with the capital in Dârloaia, Neamț county. As the father owned an apartment in Piatra Neamț, he asked for mobile service which was the moment when they installed the listening and recording device.<sup>18</sup> We can see this in an note of analyse from Securitate that said:

„considering the objective’s request for having mobile service, we get in touch with *T.O.* service, in order to authorise the request and in this way we can introduce there the equipment A.C.T., through that we will find out the commentaries he is making with the persons that are visting him. Term: 15th July 1978. It is executed by: *T.O.* service, Captain Asaftei V.”<sup>19</sup>

Last but not least, the supervising action was also represented by the constant and **secret search of his house**. The number of this search, and how frequently they were made ist not know, but according to the repport made by the Inspectorate of Neamț County from Ministry of Internal Affairs, dated and approved at 15th March 1979, these existed<sup>20</sup>. This report, that existed in only

<sup>17</sup> N.C.S.S.A, Informative Background, file number 235967, second volume, ff. 383-384.

<sup>18</sup> Father Grebenea was aware of the fact that his calls were listened to : “ They are listening my calls. I made a request for mobile service and then I went to Bazna for treatments. When I came back after a month the request was accepted and I had two notifications that were telling me to come and get the phone. In that time there were some people in my block of flats, and even on my floor that have been waiting for 4-5 years in order to their request to be authorised. When I find out that, I asked myself: *Who needs more my phone? Me or the Securitate?*” Nicolae Grebenea priest, *op.cit.*, p. 577.

<sup>19</sup> N.C.S.S.A, Informative Background, file number 207204, second volume, f.129.

<sup>20</sup> From the testimony of the father we can find more about these practices: “They were entering in my flat with false keys when me and my wife were not home (we mostly stayed at Iași) and guarded by other agents that were on my floor, they controlled what they wanted and how much they wanted. Mostly after my retirement they were often entering in my flat. One time they have even slept there and left the bed unmade. I had țuică too, as I was making 50-80 liters anually and I rarely

Revd. Ionuț Manu

one copy 0211/2652, in father Nicolae Grebenea's files from N.C.S.S.A. it is said that: "From the dates obtained in the supervision of Nicolae Grebenea, we find out that he is owning a book named *Struggles*- written by the legionnaire Crișan Constantin from Bacău, and some letters with prejudicial content and personal writings in the form of sermons or translations. In order to verify that our information is accurate and if he truly has some letters with hostile content- with that we can find out more about the subject and take some precaution methods, it is imposed a secret perquisition of his house. For applying this measures, I propose to act like this:

Considering the fact that the subject has been put in a public debate in 1977, the subject remained in the eyes of our agents, for influence and izolation, we will take him out of the building by calling him at the section. Regarding his wife, we wil get in touch with the Inspectorate of the Iași County concerning her presence at her daughter's place that is living in Iași, her name is Mazilu Mariana. The wife has been there fore six months now. We will enter in his house with the key that we have, that is a dupe taken with a mold.

I propose that the entrance in the flat should be made by Major Onu Alexandru, Captain Asaftei Vasile and Sergeant Alexandru Gabriel, that will conduct the perquisition and will make copies from the documents that are helpful for us in this situation. I also propose that the route should be supervised by „F” and Lieutenant Lupu Ilie, the persons that are knowing the subject and would stop the wife to enter in the apartment, if she or other person will want to go inside.

Between the teams that are inside and the teams that are outside there will be permanent contact by using Storno radio stations. Captain Asaftei Vasile [comes his signature with a note:]

It was secretly conducted and a writing has been copied.”<sup>21</sup>

In order to enlarge the supervision, the agents from Securitate were often tried to find out more about the father Grebenea. They were periodically taking new measures, other than those that were provided in the action plan. These were often made by the superiors of Securitate who were always supervising the fol-

---

had a drink. I need to say that I have never observed that something was stolen, everything was in their place.” in Priest Nicolae Grebenea, *op.cit.*, p.577.

<sup>1</sup> is surprising the father's serenity and peace when he talk about these home violations from the Securitate. It is totally beyond belief in our times this kind of practice, but the love and wiseness of Father Grebenea are the signs of the ascent to transcendence, to anointing, that his holiness was still meeting since this life.

<sup>21</sup> N.C.S.S.A., Informative Background, file number 207204, first volume, f. 209.

*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

lowing process and most of time they had information from more sources and at least two informative lines. In the supervising of the priest, according to the dates from the records, there existed at least one kind of extension for the supervising plan, that was taken by the heads of Security of Târnăveni County at 21st October 1966. Among the new measures that were desired to be applied are:

„a) as the agents MARINESCU ALEXANDRU and CHIRILĂ IOAN live in other villages and they seldom can get hold of the subject, and the agents HOLOM DUMITRU and GLIGOR DUMITRU are peasants without any educational background and can not find out all about the activities of the subject, it will be completed the study about the father Graure Ioan<sup>22</sup> and his inveiglement to collaborate with the Securitate<sup>23</sup>.

Deadline: 30 December 1966 Executed by: Captain Suciu Ioan

b) we will get in touch with Ministry of Internal Affairs in Bacău and we will give them the details that agent MORARU find out and confirmed by agents HOLOM DUMITRU and GLIGOR PETRE, asking at the same, that this new agent should be hired in order to make the subject talk about which one of the legionnaires he got in touch with, what he knows about their situation and what kind of relationships they have with each other. Especially with the legionnaires from Sibiu, where he seems to travel often. Executes: Captain Suciu Ioan , Deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> November 1966.

c) there will be asked dates and relationships about his relatives from Sibiu, what is known about his sister in law, that is said to had come from Latin

---

<sup>22</sup> The Securitate wanted to recruit the priest Ioan Graure , as informant agent for father Nicolae Grebenea, because it was known-from another informant- that he is on very good terms with father Nicolae. That agent told the Securitate that: “The source is informing us about priest Graure Ioan from village Biia. He came in Biia village 4 years ago from village Ceargăul Mic, Mediaş county. I discussed with the priest lots of times about the Collective Farming Units-C.F.U., from Biia village and he was saying that it is getting better and better, and he was giving as example his father from Giurgiu that is living quite good with C.F.U. and also the C.F.U. from Sona is working really good . He also tells to all members to take part in the labour and work honestly because only by doing this will have all things that they need. He is friend with the teachers Gheorghe Dahnovici, Turcu Gheorge and Epureanu Matei, state secretary-and they visit each other. Withal the father in good terms with Nicolae Grebenea from Sona, village Spini. He visited Niolae in Sona and Nicolae comes aswell to visit him and they spent lots of hours toghether. Today, when the source was there, they discussed about their families and their problems. Last time Gebenea payed a visit to Graure was on Saint George’s Day, Saturday, 23th April 1966. [comes the false name] Bucur Petru” in N.C.S.S.A., Informative Background , file number 235976, second volume, f. 318.

<sup>23</sup> According to the father’s Grebenea testimony, the Securitate succeeded in making the father Graure an informer, but he secretly told him what they made him to do. So when father Graure was receiving questions about Grebenea, he came to him, they were discussing together what were the appropriate answers, he wrote them and then took them to Securitate.

Revd. Ionuț Manu

America, and also if they have a foreign agent with possibilities which will contact him when he moves in that city.

Executes: Captain Suciu Ioan. Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> November 1966

d) through agents HOLOM DUMITRU and GLIGOR PETRU we will find out when the subject will leave to Sibiu in order to look after him and find out who is he talking to.

e) communicate with M.A.I. from Iași the way the father Nicole Grebenea is known and ask for notes about the daughter's behaviour and activity, she is a student at University of Pharmacy from Iași.

Executes: Maior Mazilu from Third Direction.

f) establish agents among the legionnaires with which Grebenea was in detention and analysing the possibility of making them agents in order to contact him.

Executes: Maior Mazilu from Third Direction

g) for knowing the elements from other cities and villages with which Grebenea is keeping in touch and their letters will be asked from M.A.I. Brașov that through F Blaj bureau and the correspondence will be in our control.

Executes: Captain Suciu . Deadline: 10<sup>th</sup> November 1966.

h) because in action there are no materials from which result the subject's behaviour and attitude in detention and the legionnaires he was staying with, there will be taken some measures to find the place where the materials about him are and if possible they will be obtained in order to be used in action.

Executes: Maior Mazilu from Third Direction

i) as the verification action came over the deadline and from the materials that we have obtained until the present we can see that the subject is maintaining his legionnaire position. It is imposed his informative work in order to find out who is he still in touch with and the verification file will be transformed into informative file.

Given the degree of importance for Grebenea's Nicolae legionnaire activity, the action will be taken in control by First Service of Third Division, which will be sent the most important materials from which result the hostile attitude of the subject"<sup>24</sup>.

But the Securitate was not satisfied with the fact that they were following him, they also wanted to recruit agents among his contributors<sup>25</sup>, not because his

---

<sup>24</sup> N.C.S.S.A., Informative Background, file number 235976, second volume, ff. 104-106.

<sup>25</sup> The position of Grebenea is visible in the statement: "I truly want to be and remain a priest. This is the best thing that I can do for you. I do not doubt your love for Romania, and as patriot you

*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

holiness will become a trustworthy agent, but because on one hand they wanted to discredit him, and on another hand they wanted to blackmail him with something. About the discussions and actions developed by the Securitate to make him collaborate and at the same time to incriminate him, he give a strict secret report to the Security Inspectorate of Alba County:

“At 12<sup>th</sup> June 1969, together with Captain Văduva Ioan I contacted the priest Grebenea Nicolae- in Blaj city. We set a meeting and he was punctual. There were discussions about the antisocial actions of legionnaires, occasion with which I observed that the priest was trying to justify these actions as a result of the measures that were taken against the legionnaires. This position imposed the discussion of some aspects in order to demonstrate him that his opinion is wrong.

About his recent activities he said that he went to Sibiu to inquire about the course that will take place in Curtea de Argeş. I consider that this was just a reason because with his matter, only the dean could help him. About his travel to Sibiu he also said that he find out that the priest Cîdea Spiridon was condemned for some mistakes. I was stepping in in these discussions and I told him that the priest could not be arrested only for some mistakes, he should have done something that was punished by the penal law. He told me that Cîdea was owning some gold, a gun, and some materials from legionnaires but he have not done anything against the regime. Asking him from where does he knows all these things, he said that they discussed together after 1964 and that the priest Cîdea Spiridon told him that everything has changed and all things get used to the new system. He said that there were witnesses against Cîdea- one from Făgăraş - the priest Florea from Luduş.

About his concerns for the future he said that he want to send his wife at a mountain resort but he do not want to come. I was trying to bring in the discussion the attitude of the persons that were arrested and which he met but I can see that he is avoiding this subject by saying that he could not meet them

---

want its good. We need to collaborate with each other and sing along the symphony of romanians. But how we should sing it? Each one with his musical score. So, the priest need to remain at priesthood, the judge at court, the teacher at school, the shoemaker at bootmaking, everybody with their profession. We cannot break the domains because there will be a mess, the symphony will be a chaos. So everybody should remain at its place. This way the state will be better if the workers from every domain are better. If school is good, the justice is good, the army is good, the Church is good and all the state's domains are good. If it is is not good and the professions are infringed, the teacher instead of going to school he will be in politics. It will be beautiful and good, mister colonel, that we all sing along the symphony of Romanians in the manner I have said before, each one singing his part.” in Priest Nicolae Grebenea , *op.cit.*, p.502.

Revd. Ionuț Manu

and that he is avoiding them. That was a lie because after the releasing he met with some prisoners.

He said that he would fancy to discuss again and he asked when he need to come at Blaj. We have not set a date, but I told him I will search for him at his house. I have acted like this because it need to be known in the village that he is searched by the Securitate and also because we will have the possibility to go at his place when the operative situation is requiring.

I think that with this subject we need to have extensive discussions as I figured out that he is hesitant when it comes about the legionnaire organization.

Captain Chealda V. [comes the signature]<sup>26</sup>

Needs to be signaled that the first page of the report contain an addition note from 17th June 1969, written in red colour and signed by a colonel of Securitate that says: “this should go into compromising Grebenea”<sup>27</sup>.

It can be observed that the Securitate *made a real concern in compromising father Nicolae* in the eyes of the the people where he worked, in the eyes of his colleagues from the Holy Altars and in the B.O.R. leaders, in friends’ eyes, relatives’ and also neighbours<sup>28</sup>, but mostly in the friends’ eyes and in the eyes of the former convicted and overall in the eyes of Romanian society.

The way of compromising the father Nicolae by the Securitate evolved, from the practices<sup>29</sup> of fixing meetings in the parish with agents from Securitate <sup>30</sup> and

---

<sup>26</sup> N.C.S.S.A. , Informative Background, file number 235976, second volume, ff.164-165. Rapport of Security Inspectorate of Alba County.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, f.164.

<sup>28</sup> When father Grebenea moved to Piatra Neamț in a flat, the Securitate wanted to discredit him among his neighbours saying that he was not cleaning his apartment, and this could affect the health of others. Between the methods that Securitate has proposed it was an also an idea to call the Sanity Authority- the SANEPID- in order to have his house controlled. For further details see N.C.S.S.A., Informative Background, file number 207204, second volume, f.153.

<sup>29</sup> This kind of practice was often used by the Securitate in order to compromise the clergy, especially those living in the village, in front of believers from parish. Remember among others was the priest **Timișan Emil** from Sâncraii, Hunedoara, that was often visited by an agent, in order to be believed that he was working with the Securitate. *Sufferers and sufference in communist prisons* , coordinator Pr. Dr. Florin Dobrei, Bishopric of Deva and Hunedoara, Deva, 2015, p. 162.

<sup>30</sup> About this kind of visit made by the agents of Securitate father Grebenea talks about in his work: “In an afternoon, when the autumn has just came, three agents of Securitate payed me a visit. I told them to go inside but they have said : It’s beautiful outside. Let’s go in the garden and talk, in this way we will not bore the lady with our discussions. We went to the garden and sit on some blankets on the grass. I brought some brandy made from prunes that had like 40 degrees or so, and something to eat: cheese, bacon, bread and whatever was there, probably some fruit. There were all from Oltenia: the major Văduva, Chialda and another one whose name I forgot.” In Priest Grebenea Nicolae, op.cit., pp. 492-493. We can see clearly that the agents intention was to make their visit as clear as possible.

*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

the launching of many rumours about him in the society, only to discredit him in front of the parishioners, through fake documents and compromising facts.

In this way, according to the action plan that Securitate's agents intended to execute, they needed to get data and informations in order to make him seem guilty and compromise him. It was not a problem if the information was real or not, the most important thing was its existence.

The analysing note, number 356/00159 from 23th January 1980 of Security Inspectorate of Neamţ County was mentioning:

“The informative and operational activity in this file was made by executing the orders of the heads of Securitate from 1st January 1979. They were mostly interested in finding, verificating and examining the relations that the subject made, and all this leading to compromising and isolation. Among the connections that the priest made we mention: Mareş Petru, Băluţ Traian, Ioniţă Gheorghe and Florea Elisabeta. These were examined by the agents of the Securitate and we found out what kind of relation the priest has with each of them. They have told our agents how is he behaving and they said they will not get in contact with him anymore.

In the researching process that followed, dates were obtained through the local newspaper in order to dis fame the priest. It was found out from Florea's Elisabeta declaration that Nicolae Grebenea was behaving inappropriately for a priest. Ioniţă Gheorghe was also convinced to make a complaint to Interior Ministry saying that he was deceived by Grebenea. The priest offered him some medical advice in exchange of a sum of money. The piece of advice was contrary to that given by the doctors and given by his illness.

Also, because the subject have stayed in the analysed period at his daughter, Mazilu Mariana, at Iaşi, we talked to Interior Ministry Inspectorate of Iaşi County because he needed supervision while he was there”<sup>31</sup>.

The Securitate was permanently changing the evolution of the discrediting process in order to obtain a satisfying outcome. It was decided that through Ioniţă Gheorghe's declaration father Grebenea would be investigated by Miliţie, under the eye of its agents, and depending on the evolution of researches, he would be punished accordingly.

At the same time the Securitate decided to publish an article in the local newspaper that would degrade him in the eyes of the priests, acquaintances and contacts. To make public the article the agents questioned the doctor from the village

<sup>31</sup> N.C.S.S.A., Informative Background, file number 207204, first volume, f. 146. Analysing note from the informative file Drumeş from 23th January 1980.

Revd. Ionuț Manu

in order to obtain the documents that would incriminate him. Once done with the papers, the agents got in contact with the editor of *Ceahlăul* newspaper in order to publish the article. This was on the seventh page of the newspaper at the rubric named *Stop frame* with the title *Classified ads*: „**Patient**: One day he came at my house, unannounced, one Nicolae Grebenea, I do not know where he found out about my illness. He gave me some prescriptions. I paid him and I gave him wine and he said that he will come again. He came and again, I gave him money and wine and he gave me some medicine. Then he asked me about others that are sick in the village, it would not matter what kind of illness they have. After a while I have realised that I suffer a lot because of that medicine. I speak to the public because he might harm others.(Gheorghe Ioniță, Mărgineni). **Doctor**: I have found Gheorghe Ioniță in a very bad state. He had undergone a surgery at both legs and after I consulted him he complained about some curer in Piatra Neamț. Some others patients told me about these *kind* acts. I think that this crook should be punished before he makes any more victims(Dr. K. Tiberiu). Watch out naives!<sup>32</sup>”

And although the agents were working so hard to discredit Father Grebenea, often they could do only a little to satisfy their interests, sometimes noting at all: “It was observed that at Piatra Neamț, Grebenea has strengthen his bounds with another hostile element named *Tăunul*<sup>33</sup> with which in the past had a sporadic contact. They are frequently visting each other, they are making hostile comments adressed to the party and to our state and are spreading the news given by the capitalist radio stations<sup>34</sup>. So to destroy this new bond, the agents tried to damage their relationship through provoking arguments and fights between the two. It is not known the way it was put into use, but we know for sure that if this was put in the action plan, the agents were sure to make it happen.<sup>35</sup>

But the Securitate was not happy with this either, they wanted the Father to be excluded from the Christian Church. So, one of the colonels advised, on 9 March 1978 for report number 00356/128 from 7 March 1978, that:

“We do not need to talk at the department[of cults] in order to make him unable to serve the church, we need to talk with the archpriest or we need to get in touch with someone from the Metropolitan of Iași through mate Călărașu. Mainly the priests need to be announced in order not to give a privilege of this kind. We need to colaborate with the Inspectorate of Iași County to see what kind of relationships has or makes when he is travelling<sup>36</sup>.”

---

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 144. Report with proposals in DUI „Drumeș”.

<sup>33</sup> Conspiratorial name.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 16. Analysing note from tracking file Drumeș din 28 iulie 1983.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 16, verso.

<sup>36</sup> N.C.S.S.A., Informative Background, file number 207204, vol. 2, f. 141. Annotation of a Securitate’s colonel.



*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

The consequence of this method can be seen in the report of the Deanery of Piatra Neamț meeting when the case of father Nicolae Grebenea was debated: „ Today ,26th January 1977, the extraordinary work meeting of the Deanery from Piatra Neamț it was developed this way:

08:15 a.m. Meeting in conference room of the Deanery. The calling: from 87 priests, here are 82 priests, missing: : Pr. Mihailescu Dumitru, sick in the hospital; Pr. Lica Vasile in holiday for studies; Pr. Mitocaru Mihai and Pr. Grigoriu Eugen unknown reasons; Pr. Veleşcu Ștefan, sick.

08:30 a.m. Reverend father Counselor Toma Rîpă opens the meeting saying that there is a problem that is putting the Church in a bad light, it is presented a material from D-1 Prof. Petre Risipeanu, Secretary Counselor of People from Neamț County.

His Eminence brings hierachal blessings from Metropolitan Archbishop Iustin, salutes the presence of mister Secretary of the Council and of mister Prof. Gh. Călărășu, Inspector of Cults Department from Neamț County.

08:35-09:30 a.m Mister professor Petre Risipeanu presents the material that we will talk briefly in the second page.

09:30-09:50 a.m. The word is given to father Nicolae Grebenea<sup>37</sup>, from Vlădiceni parish, Bârgăuani village, Neamț county. [comes next the name of the priests that were engaged in discussions<sup>38</sup>]<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately his speech in front of this *ad-hoc* court was not mentioned in the notes, but it is mentioned in His Holiness autobiographical work: “I wanted this conference to happen differently, to feel that we are all under the protection of the Holy Spirit. But in the atmosphere I can only feel the tension, and that thing is not possible right now. Gentlemen. they bring me serious accusations: that I have spread the war and I have badly influenced the youth. I have been supervised by the Securitate from six months and then my file has been closed. If I was guilty of any of this the Securitate would have found out and I would not be free right now. It is true that I have been a legionnaire, but I have paid with my flesh and blood for 22 years of prison my lack of wisdom from my ealy years and I do not understand why I am punished right now because of this. On another hand when I was released I have undergone a tough and long process of re-education, and the authority claimed that I am *re-educated*. When I got out of prison I wanted to work like this: to have in one hand the Holy Cross and in the other the national flag. In other words I wanted to work for the Church and for the Homeland, combining the work for these two. And I have worked like this all this time, without any deviation. Risipeanu interrupted me: -This is enough! Get over this! Commitments! and some priests that were sitting down said too: - Commitments! Commitments! My answer was: The commitment I can take right now is: I will try to make all the good I can make considering my powers and my age.” From Pr. Nicolae Grebenea, *op.cit.*, pp. 594-595.

<sup>38</sup> About this episode the Father was saying: “To my amazement they were raising like 27 hands. Before they were only raising like 10-15 hands, not more. But now they were all invited to speak and I figured out that this was not spontaneous, this was organized before. Pr. Nicolae Grebenea *op.cit.*, p. 595.

<sup>39</sup> N.C.S.S.A., Informative Background, file number 207204, vol. 2, f. 236. The report of the work meeting of Piatra Neamț Deanery from 26th January 1977.

Revd. Ionuț Manu

Among the main accusations that are found in this report and that will be brought against Father Grebenea at the meeting we include: the detachment from Church and State and the betrayed of their interests; lack of patriotism and neglect of the church; he broke the commandment of love and instead of being a positive example for others he is a negative one; instead of singing religious songs he is singing fascist song; he insults, make the people hate each other and he remove them from work; he organise meetings with fascist character and he initiate others in fascist former groups; he does not agrees with the priestly conferences, he mostly disagrees with their developing method; he misinterprets the books that appear, etc.<sup>40</sup>

The father was *deluded* and among those who had spoken about the father's situation they all agreed that through his behavior and his activities he stained and he upset the Church. The conclusion of this situation is obvious, from just looking at these discussions and it was expressed by the party's secretary that was commissioning the father counselour Rîpă to tell His Eminence Metropolitan „the opinion of priests is that he should be excluded”<sup>41</sup>.

After this meeting the father Grebenea paid a visit to the Metropolitan of Moldova from these times, Iustin Moiescu, and after this audience he gave his resignation and the request of retirement by his own will at 1st March 1977.

From the documents of former Securitate we can easlily figure out the emotional state of father Grebenea after this forced removal from serving in Deanry of Neamț, accomplished by intimidation,deceiving and pressure from the organs of Securitate, which was not based on the truth. His reign was deeply affected by this measure:”he was morally killed and he prefered more to be arrested in exchange of this measure”<sup>42</sup>. It is obvious that the father would be separated from the priests that were close to him, from his friends and implicitly from serving the Church, which is why he said that he would rather go to prison instead of being morally compromised.

Although he was criticised in public, compromised and eliminated from those who were serving the Chrurch in Neamț Deanery, the Securitate was still following him. Taking into consideration the reports made from Securitate:” In supervising the subject, mostly after debating in public his situation and after his resignation, we need to take more measures in order to know where is he going to, with whom he enters in contact with and his manifestations. We need to take into account that now he has more time, he is still robust and he often travels in

---

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 237-250.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 250.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 173. Annotation made by a colonel of Securitate.

*The supervision of the clergy after the release from detention. The case of Nicolae Grebenea*

others villages and in county, so he can enter in contact with legionnaires and he can develop hostile actions. Urgent measures are needed, in order to keep him under observation in his flat from Piatra Neamț and in his trips. It is also needed to use the others machines for surveillance. He need to be put in stakeout when he travels. We need to see better the way he is analysed and find ways of framing him more efficiently. From all of our informers we need to find the one who has more possibilities to find out more about him. And if we do not have anyone we need to recruit. You need to complete the plan.[Comes the signature that is indecipherable]<sup>43</sup>.

Although the files from the archives of National Council for Studying the Securitate Archives do not contain relevant data for the last period of life of Father Grebenea, under the communist regime it goes without saying that he was still harassed by the Securitate. According to the priest they had tried to eliminate him twice by poisoning and irradiance.

The attended murder by **poisoning** had developed: „On 5th January 1984 I was sent by the father Archipriest of Iași T. Irimia, by his own will and not with my intervention, in Mănăstirea, Dăgâta village, Iași county, to serve for New Year and Epiphany Day(Boboteaza) because there was no priest and no servings, since 1983 for Easter.

It was the Eve of Epiphany , Thursday. After I went in all the people's houses and bless them with Holy Water and basil from every village in Mănăstirea, I needed to go in Mănăstirea too. I have not had a singer, but I had an impromptu one. At the second house, they convinced me to drink some wine. As soon as I drank a little bit I felt a strong burning in my stomach; at every house from there I felt the need to ask for a glass of water. My stomach was burning. I had drank 20 glasses of water, one after another and after them I asked for some salty water from the pickled cabbage, and I drank like 250 grams of it. When we arrived at a house the singer told me: „-Here are living some old people that can not come to the church. Please help them confess.” I had confessed them. There they bring us some food, some boiled fruit with their juice. As soon as I swallowed some of them I felt again the same burning in my stomach. I had stopped eating.”<sup>44</sup>

The second attempt to eliminate father Grebenea was through irradiation, in less than 3 weeks after the first attempt, and it was like this: „On 24th January I came back in Piatra Neamț alone. My wife stayed to help our daughter, Mariana and her husband. Tuesday I was called at the Securitate by the major V. Asaftei that was handling legionnaire problems. He asked me a statement where I need-

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>44</sup> Pr. Nicolae Grebenea, *op.cit.*, pp. 661-662

Revd. Ionuț Manu

ed to say where I have been travelling since the last meeting. He used to call me in from time to time, and sometimes there was the colonel Stanciu. Now the colonel Stanciu was not here. I gave my statement and then I went to the bathroom. When I got out the major Asaftei was smiling and was so joyful. When I got back I found him talking to major Alexandru Onu. He seemed very pleased and invited me to sit down, but I have refused as I observed when I was walking that I was limping with my left foot. That took about an hour. When I got home I have examined my legs. The veins from both of my legs, up to my knees, were inflamed.”<sup>45</sup> In fact in the chair where the priest sit, The Securitate put a radioactive material in order to make him sick and eliminate him not only from the public life.

From this two attempts of murder, the Father Grebenea miraculously escaped unharmed thanks to the mercy of God, intuition, intelligence and his knowledge of naturist remedies.

---

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 665.