

A FORGOTTEN CASE OF VIOLATION OF
HUMAN DIGNITY (1951-1955):
ERALDO PINTORI, ITALIAN
DIPLOMATIC OFFICER ON BUCHAREST

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Abstract: The study refers to a case still little known in Romania's contemporary history: the arrest of foreign diplomats in Bucharest in order to ensure the economic and commercial advantages for the Communist regime. It's about Eraldo Pintori, an official at the Italian Legation in Bucharest, kidnapped, arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned by the Bucharest regime in order to negotiate with Italy the ownership of the largest Romanian building abroad - the Accademia di Romania in Rome and obtaining financial and commercial facilities based on the blackmail made with delaying the release of Pintori. It is a serious and obvious case of harm to human dignity in which the political unites with the religious, Pintori being condemned in the „Process against Vatican Spies”.

Keywords: Human dignity, Communism, Securitate, Italy, Romania

A little debated topic in the national historiography is that of the persecution by the Romanian Communist authorities of the diplomats and the Western diplomatic officials accredited in Bucharest. We know a lot about politicians, intellectuals, Romanian clerics killed or thrown in prison by politically manipulated processes, but we still have no record of the many cases of violation of dignity and endangering the lives of those who represented the Western countries in Bucharest.

Such a case, mentioned tangentially in journalistic reminiscences, is that of the official of the Italian Legation in Bucharest, Eraldo Pintori, thrown in the middle of some dramatic political-diplomatic-commercial

controversies that deeply damaged his dignity and threatened his life. The story to which his destiny is linked begins in December 1947, when the Romanian business official in Rome, the Legation counselor Basil Șerban, communicated on December 29, to the Romanian Academy and the Ministry of Education that the Romanian Legation will take over from them the Romanian School in Rome (*Accademia di Romania*) starting January 5, 1948. The abrupt change in the Romanian form of government, one day later, by the dramatic abdication of King Mihai, confirmed that the diplomat Basil Șerban was following a well-defined plan, established in Bucharest, which he begins to implement, with consequences of the most unnatural for the fate of the Academy of Romania¹.

From the position of interim chief of the Romanian Legation in Rome on January 19, 1948, the Legation counselor Basil Șerban addressed the Mayor of Rome, Salvatore Rebecchini², with the request, given the difficult situation of Romania after the war (ie the need to save the money that the Legation paid on rent), for the Romanian Legation to move to a few floors in the Romanian School in Rome. The request was addressed to the Mayor of Rome and not to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Rome, because Romanian diplomats knew the clauses that obliged the Romanian state, regardless of its form of organization, to address the land concession made free to the *Accademia di Romania*, by the city of Rome, only for cultural purposes. It provided that, in case of renunciation of the activities of academic-university character, the concession will be revoked, and the land, with the related construction, returns to the administration of the Eternal Fortress.

The response to Basil Șerban's request did not come from the Mayor of Rome but, as was natural, from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He replied to the Romanian Legation on February 6, 1948, refusing the request. The Italian Foreign Ministry explains in the refusal that Romania cannot be granted an exception by changing the cultural destination of these foreign institutes with academic-cultural character. The Communist authorities in Bucharest ignored the signal given by the Italian MFA and gave a green light to an undesirable fact, which will open

1 At large on this subject Veronica Turcuș, Șerban Turcuș, *Între cultură, șantaj și spionaj. Accademia di Romania la crepuscul (1947-1955). Studiu și documente*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2017, p. 18-51.

2 Salvatore Rebecchini (21 februarie 1891 – 21 noiembrie 1977) was an Italian politician, member of the Christian democracy, Mayor of Rome from 1946 to 1956..

the Pandora's box in Romanian-Italian relations. Overcoming the refusal of the Italian authorities, the Romanian Legation, however, moved to a wing of the edifice, communicating to the Italian Foreign Ministry, on August 4, 1948, that it was temporarily transferred there for „no more than six months”, and on August 14 it was added that „the temporary occupation of the building of the Romanian Academy will affect only one wing of the edifice, without prejudicing in any way the good functioning of the Academy”. It can be seen from this that the Romanian Foreign Ministry already considered itself the owner of the building, being able to use it as it pleases, keeping only a shadow of respect for the old agreements that gave an unequivocal designation to the building.

The Italian side was placed in front of the accomplished fact. The entire diplomatic and pseudodiplomatic activity of Romania in the Italian capital had stormed the Accademia di Romania and transformed it into its headquarters. We need to look carefully at what the stake was in this case. Of the European countries in the Soviet camp Romania had, from a housing point of view, the most privileged position in the topography of the Eternal Fortress; it had from the cultural perspective the largest building, placed, somewhat strategically, in a cosmopolitan area of the Eternal City from which the activities of cultural institutions of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Great Britain, Holland or Sweden could be supervised. Also, a short distance from the Accademia di Romania, one kilometer to the east and one kilometer to the north were two large Italian military units. When we refer to the pseudodiplomatic activities, we take into account the fact that immediately after winning the elections of November 1946, the diplomatic staff of the kingdom began to be purged of career diplomats, an activity that intensified after the abdication of King Mihai.

In 1948 the diplomatic corps of the Romanian People's Republic was infested with non-professional elements, which either did not have the necessary culture required for that specific activity, or were disguised as diplomats working in special Soviet or Romanian service structures. In view of the irremediable deterioration of the relations between the Holy See and Romania during 1948, the location of the Romanian School in Rome was convenient for the specific supervision of the Italian Embassy near the Holy See, located a few hundred meters to the West. The Accademia di Romania Palace corresponded from many points of view to a situation in which the diplomatic activity in a friendly country turned into an activity of surveillance of a country considered to be an enemy.

Faced with an atypical situation, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried to arrange discussions to convince the Romanian side of the injustice and inelegance of the actions of occupying the Romanian School. In the discussions that took place with the Romanian Legation (from March 4, 1948, the Romanian minister in Rome was Niculae Cioroiu³, and Basil Serban was first councilor), the Italian side challenged „in the most formal way” the Legation’s right to occupy, even partly, the headquarters of the Academy. However, in the face of the accomplished fact and proving a wisdom worthy of another partner, the Italian Foreign Minister agreed to a compromise to the limit of diplomatic effectiveness. The Romanian legation in Rome was invited to limit the so-called „*provisional occupation*” to six months, that is until February 28, 1949, after which it was to transfer to another building restoring the Academy to its original role. The concession made by the Italian side was interpreted as a weakness for transforming the school premises into a self-contained diplomatic representation. Bypassing the fundamental provisions that governed the functioning of the Romanian settlement in the Italian capital, the Romanian side advanced, at the end of the six-month grace period, the idea of buying the land under the building. This is the suggestion that the Romanian Legation presented to the Italian side on April 2, 1949, when the Romanian Legation had not yet left the building. The justification for the action of maintaining the Legation in the Accademia di Romania was provided by a presumptive plot of the Italian Christian-Democrat authorities to entrust the building to the association of the Romanian emigrants from Italy (called fascists).

In Bucharest, the politico-diplomatic aversion to Italy and the Holy See received⁴, during the year 1950, new valences, one of the hardest

3 Niculae Cioroiu was born in 1908. He graduated from the Academy of High Commercial and Industrial Studies in Bucharest (1932) and becomes a member of the Romanian Communist Party which was outside of the law. After August 23, 1944, he is appointed secretary of the Constanta Region, activist of the Romanian Labor Party, deputy (1946–1948; 1952–1957). He started his diplomatic career as a representative of Romania in Rome (1948–1949), and continued with missions in Tel Aviv (1949–1950), London (1950–1952), Beijing and Hanoi (1956–1957), New Delhi (1957–1961). From 1952–1956 he was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, during the terms of Simion Bughici and Grigore Preoteasa. Since 1965 he has been director of the History Museum of P.C.R.

4 Veronica Turcuș Șerban Turcuș, *Închiderea Nunțiatarii Apostolice de la București (6/7 iulie 1950), într-un raport diplomatic din epocă*, în *Clio în oglindiri de sine. Academicianului Alexandru Zub Omagiu*, editor Gheorghe Cliveti, Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași, 2014, p. 809-815

possible. Outlining itself as a conflict with an ideological profile, the purpose was very prosaic, the complete reattachment of the Romanian central administration to Soviet anti-Western projects. Revealing their intentions to completely abandon any project regarding the reopening of the Romanian School in Rome, the Romanian Government, in March 1950, denounced the Italian-Romanian Cultural Agreement of April 8, 1943 and asked the Italian Government to close its Institute in Bucharest. It was suggested that the respective Cultural Agreement is obsolete because it was signed by two ideologically compromised regimes, and an extension of it would be in total contradiction with the evolution of the Romanian society. It was a one-sided denunciation, as was the case with the Holy See, the Soviet ideology and interests in Romania prevailing over the conventions and agreements specific to international law. The situation was also such that the Italian authorities felt the need to approach the issue in a pragmatic manner. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs resumes, as a result of the denunciation by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Cultural Agreement, the question of the status of the Italian-Romanian cultural relations.

The diplomats from Rome decide to accelerate the legal solution in the case of the Accademia di Romania. In view of the principle of reciprocity and the unintentional termination of the Italian Cultural Institute in Bucharest, the Italian authorities ordered the definitive termination of any cultural activity at the Accademia di Romania and the Romanian House in Venice. The cancellation of the cultural character of the Academy automatically resulted in the decay of rights of the Romanian authorities regarding the property of the building. In June 1950, an exchange of quite heated Verbal Notes takes place between Italy and Romania. Thus, on June 7, 1950, responding to a Verbal Note of the Romanian Legation in Rome regarding the abusive presence of an individual in the perimeter of the Accademia di Romania, the peninsular authorities claim that they cannot recognize and have not acknowledged the Academy building the character and prerogatives as headquarters of the diplomatic representation, the building having a completely different destination. It is specified that the allowance of staying six months there has been abundantly exceeded, and the Romanian side must understand that, according to the initial legal terms, the responsibility of the building rests with the Romanian municipality. The answer of the Romanian Legation is immediate (also June 7) and with a less than diplomatic

attitude it asserts that *“at the moment when a suitable premises for the activity of the Legation will be made available to it - a location that could not be found by the Legation’s own means -, The legation will vacate the current premises”*. Such a point of view is difficult to understand given that, according to the custom, each country chooses according to its own technical-institutional criteria the location of the diplomatic mission. Also, the Italian attitude which understands not to recognize the character and the prerogatives of the diplomatic representation of the Academy is vehemently rejected.

The pressures are exacerbated so much that the business manager a.i. of Romania in Rome, Comnacu, is invited to discuss at the Italian MFA. On November 16, 1950 the Romanian diplomat is asked concretely: when will the Legation leave the Academy building? Comnacu, resuming an excuse that Romanian diplomats have used for more than two years to justify the invasion of the Academy, complains that he has not found, for four months, a suitable headquarters for the Legation, which must be a villa with 30 - 35 rooms. When asked by the Italian side whether an official of the municipality, who in the legal conditions of the moment should have activated the clause of withdrawal of the concession, could see what spaces the Legation occupies in the building (for establishing extraterritoriality), Comnacu answers evasively: the Legation occupies the right side of the entrance, but a visit cannot be authorized, because it cannot be so clearly delimited ... the right from the left! The Italian authorities wanted to make a concrete assessment of the situation on the spot, but this was not allowed, even if they were legally entitled to do so. The situation was complicated not only from a political point of view, in terms of bilateral relations, but especially in the legal field of both international relations and elements of patrimonial law, the Romanian administration being automatically the holder of the rights over the Accademia di Romania, by virtue of the original contracts. On the other hand, such a visit could not be allowed, not even within the limits of diplomatic courtesy, given that the former school premises had become not only a diplomatic office, but rather an espionage office. Understanding once again with great willingness the fear of the Romanian diplomat, the Italian MFA representatives reiterated that the problem has been dragging on for over two years. Consequently, Comnacu is set a deadline for the evacuation of the building: January 31, 1951, after which „Comune di Roma” reserves its full freedom of action,

and the Mayor does not guarantee that the headquarters of the Legation would benefit from public services after that date!

On February 8, 1951, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reminds the Romanian Legation once again, through a Verbal Note, that the legal basis for the operation of the Academy of Romania is null, as it ceased its activity. It is mentioned that the City Hall of Rome wants to take possession of the edifice. Decisive steps in the same direction are also made by the Italian Legation from Bucharest, which urges, through a Verbal Note in 19 February 1951, the Romanian MFA to find a solution for the release of the Academy and its return to the City Hall of Rome.

With the certainty that the Accademia di Romania should not be assigned to the Roman municipality in the absence of cultural-academic activity, as stipulated in the founding documents, but maintained at any price, the Bucharest authorities took a serious and dramatic decision, but which illustrated a linear continuity with the whole previous vexatious attitude, in relation to Italy and the Holy See. It was only a beginning, but it had to be dramatic and send the message that the Communist authorities in Bucharest play hard and do not respect the rules of international relations, nor of the common morality.

On March 8, 1951 (according to other sources, March 13, 1951) Franciscan priest Clemente Gatti⁵, rector of the Italian Church in Bucharest, an Italian citizen, was arrested along with other foreign and Romanian citizens, on charges of „espionage in favor of the Vatican”. It should be remembered that Romania unilaterally broke off the diplomatic relations with the Holy See on July 7, 1950. It was a very concocted move, because Father Gatti had a double subordination, clerical to the Holy See and the order he was part of, and another on the administrative side, as the Italian Church in Bucharest was state owned by the government of

⁵ Clemente Gatti, (Caselle di Pressana, February 16, 1880 - Saccolongo, June 6, 1952), joined the novitiate at the Franciscan convent in Lonigo (Vicenza) when he was very young. After studying at the Pontifical University Antonianum in Rome, he was consecrated priest in 1904. In 1909 he was sent to Transylvania, with the mission to teach the Franciscan youth in the area. After four years in the Hunedoara area, he returns to Italy and participates in the First World War. He returned to Transylvania in 1937 to continue training the Franciscan youth. After World War II, in 1945, he was established in Alba-Iulia, from where he was transferred in February 1950 as Rector of the Italian Church in Bucharest. Arrested by the Communist authorities in Bucharest in 1950, he will be released in April 1952. After a harrowing train journey he arrives in Vienna, where he is found in the cabin paralyzed, voiceless and with moments of hallucination. He will die on June 6, 1952 at the Franciscan infirmary in Saccolongo. In 2002, the diocese of Padua opened the beatification process for the martyrdom he suffered in Romania.

Rome in the Romanian capital. To raise the stakes even further, and to make it clear to Rome that the negotiation margin for the Accademia di Romania is almost zero, the Romanian authorities raised in the area of arrests and proceeded to a direct attack on the Italian Legation in Bucharest, by arresting Eraldo Pintori⁶, on April 27, 1951, an official of the diplomatic institution, owner, it is true, of a work passport and not a diplomatic passport. The apparent paradox, between the two arrests, is the cordial and open reception that C.I. Parhon, the president of the Presidium of the Grand National Assembly, had reserved, on April 3, 1951, for Alberto Calisse⁷, the new Italian Minister in Bucharest. Pintori, destined for a job in Beirut, had already obtained the exit visa from Romania. With this arrest, the authorities in Bucharest considered, there was a very solid basis of negotiation in the bilateral affairs that had as

6 A subjective portrait of Eraldo Pintori is made by Mihai Pelin: „Who, in fact, was Eraldo Pintori? He was born in Lavena, Italy, on October 19, 1915, and in the autumn of 1922, when he was only 7, he arrived in Romania with his parents, Antonio and Antonietta. He began to support himself from his own work before coming of age, working at the General Insurance Company, from 1930 to 1936. Then, between 1936 and 1948 he had been employed by the Italian Institute of Culture, under the leadership of Bruno Manzone. In the early 1940s, he married Argilia Olivotto, an Italian national, and citizen, born March 27, 1916, in Furnicași, Muscel County, from a family of Italians established there in the first decade of the century. They had a child and lived together in Bucharest, on Str. Laurenciu Claudian no. 29. Since 1948, Eraldo Pintori had transferred as an official to the Italian Legation, becoming one of the 48 officials of the peninsular diplomatic office. At the Italian Institute of Culture, Eraldo Pintori administratively prepared various events designed by Bruno Manzone. He also made lists with different officials from the Romanian ministries of the time, who were to be invited to the meetings organized by the Institute. Not missing from these lists were Alexandru Marcu and Alexandru Balaci, diplomats once accredited in Italy, heads of departments in the Ministry of Arts, and many others. At the same time, Eraldo Pintori made records of all those who regularly attended courses in Italian language, civilization and culture. Even these activities will be considered by the Security as acts of espionage. And within the Italian Legation, from his own testimony, it was understood that Eraldo Pintori was a handy man. For example, he kept in touch with the bank official Franz Kravtchiack, through which the Legation made legal exchange of currencies. He was interested in the conditions of the passage of some goods and valuables through the Romanian customs. Received from those who repatriated values destined for transfer to Italy. Kept in touch with various Romanian citizens approved by the Legation, receiving from them some information of public interest, but not to be found in the newspapers of the time. And, whenever the occasion arose, he was ready to render smaller or more important services to his superiors in the peninsular diplomatic office. In short, he was doing everything he could to appear as an indispensable person, fit for any mission. After all, he was a landless servant, zealous to stay in office, the Security's insistence on turning him into the poster boy for a sensational spy affair was simply absurd". <http://jurnalul.ro/special-jurnalul/hartuire-legatia-italiei-sub-asediul-regimului-comunist-8-91700.html>. Eraldo Pintori died on February 25, 1992 in Barcelona, being buried in Bressanone on March 13, 1992.

7 Alberto Calisse is distinguished in the contemporary history of Italy by his role in saving the Jews from Nice from deportation to concentration camps, during the Vichy regime, being the general consul of Italy in the Mediterranean city.

central pawn the building of the Accademia di Romania, later extending to other problems with which the Romanian Communist state wanted to be helped or would want to solve them. And that's how it was. The problem of Eraldo Pintori accompanied the problem of the Accademia di Romania until the end.

In the novel document, attached to this article, Albert Calisse reports what were the circumstances of Pintori's arrest and what kind of action was taken by the Security to capture him. Although they tried to detain him without a warrant and without being seen, after entering Pintori's house under some random pretext (typical police recognition), the Italian official was illegally arrested, immediately after leaving the house, to go to the Legation. As the Security people were watching him from an adjacent building, when he left the house one of the „commando” members ordered him to follow them without protest and scandal. The fact of how the abduction truly took place was due to Pintori's wife who saw everything and alerted the Legation. It was an arrest without a warrant, a real kidnapping operation, as if taken from fiction films, an action which left without reply even the Romanian officials from the Foreign Ministry who were also afraid of the „Secret Police”.

The pivot of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bucharest around whom all the negotiations took place was Mircea Bălănescu, the general director of the General Directorate for Political Affairs⁸. Appointed in 1951 by Ana Pauker, even in the context of the radicalization of the Romanian-Italian relations, in this position of high technical-political responsibility he survived his protector through the relations he had with Gheorghe-Gheorghiu-Dej, being considered his „eye” in the Ministry. Thus, we can appreciate that all the developments of the case of the Accademia di Romania and of the connections with Eraldo Pintori's business of liberation and repatriation were monitored from the highest levels of the Bucharest policy. Neither did the Italian side neglect the Pintori affair and even though the name of Alcide de Gasperi⁹, is barely mentioned, the famous Italian politician, as Minister of Foreign Affairs

8 After ending the term as general director Mircea Bălănescu was, successively, Ambassador of Romania to France (1956-1960), Greece (1960-1968), Finland (1968-1972) and the Netherlands.

9 Alcide de Gasperi (April 3, 1881, Pieve Tesino - August 19, 1954, Borgo Valsugana), was an Italian politician. After studying literature and philosophy in Vienna he asserted himself as a journalist. He was sentenced to 16 months in prison as an opponent of the Musollinian regime. In 1943 he illegally organized the Christian Democracy (the Christian-Democratic Party of Italy). He was Prime Minister of Italy, running eight successive governments,

between July 16, 1951 and August 17, 1953, was always kept informed of the evolution of the Romanian-Italian negotiations through the Secretary General of the Roman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vittorio Zoppi¹⁰.

Eraldo Pintori's arrest appeared, apparently, not to be intimately linked to the legal and diplomatic litigation concerning the Accademia di Romania and was part of a vexatious tendency in which the countries of the Bolshevik camp were encouraged to interact strongly with the representatives of the liberal democracies. Nor was it an isolated case in Romania, as other officials of the Western diplomatic representations were arrested, and it seemed that it was rather correlated with the escalation of relations with the Holy See and with the American „Imperialism”.

On May 3, 1951, the Romanian Legation in Rome responds to the Italian MFA on the Verbal Note of February 8, the same year, arguing, without embarrassment, that the Accademia di Romania did not cease its activity until it was forced by the peninsular authorities.

On July 3, 1951, the Italian MFA communicates to the Romanian Legation in Rome that the legal arguments of the Romanian part regarding the Accademia di Romania's situation are null. It was emphasized, on the one hand, the absence of a cultural activity within the Academy and the impossibility of such activity to exist as a consequence of the denunciation by the Romanian side of the bilateral Cultural Agreement which automatically engaged the principle of reciprocity of the abolition of cultural institutes, and on the other hand, the abusive occupation of the edifice by the Romanian Legation in Italy. Accordingly, the Italian Government informs the Romanian authorities about the activation of the resolute clause of the Convention stipulated between the Municipality of Rome and the Romanian Government on January 12, 1922 and legally requests the restitution of the land and the building built there and destined to the Academy of Romania to be handed over to the City of Rome's administration. It is insisted on the obligation

...from 1945 to 1953, thus making a decisive contribution to the political and economic affirmation of post-war Italy. Since the beginning of the European unification process, De Gasperi has been together with Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer in the elaboration of the stages of establishing Europe. Deeply devoted to the Catholic Church he was buried in the portico of the Basilica of San Lorenzo al Verano. In 1993, the Archdiocese of Trento opened the process of beatification of the famous politician.

10 Vittorio Zoppi (Novara, February 23, 1898 - Rome, May 6, 1967) was an Italian career diplomat. Secretary-General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1948 to 1954, he was appointed, in 1955, as Italy's Ambassador to London (1955-1961) and, later, Italy's permanent representative to the UN (1961-1964).

to vacate the premises of the diplomats residing there and to hand over the building to Rome City Hall's delegates. The response to this Verbal Note is expected until August 20, 1951, when the Communist authorities in Bucharest claim that the activity of the Accademia di Romania has stopped only because of the Italian diplomatic pressures, it „*never interrupted its activity*”. Regarding the release of the edifice, the Note argues that the Italian government is contradicting itself, because if it accepted that the Legation is based there, it also invokes that resolution clause. The Romanian side does not say a word about the chronological terms in which the times of the Legation's residence were established there (six months), grossly exceeded for almost two years.

After the first moments of wonder and bewilderment in the bilateral relations of the Italian government, taking into account the numerous concessions made to the Romanian authorities regarding the headquarters of the Legation, the peninsular authorities decided to respond almost with the same currency, aiming directly at a tenant of Academy of Romania transformed into Legation, the driver Dumitru Dobre, a character too small for such a great war. But what was so important about the Dobre case? The symbolic charge of his arrest: he had been detained on the charge of espionage (according to the documentation, disputed by the Romanian side, a photographic film with compromising elements for his simple function as a driver had been found in his possession). A resident of the palace of the Accademia di Romania, abusively transformed into Legation, was engaged in espionage, and the location, being the only one owned by the Romanian state in the Italian capital, automatically became a spy residence. It had reached a rather dangerous turning point, from which a true „diplomatic ballet” was to start, which would prove to be a real tournament of Greco-Roman diplomatic battles.

Through the tools of diplomatic communication Rome and Bucharest begin to accuse each other of violations of customs and escalating of bilateral relations, but also left open doors for possible compromises. Shortly after Dobre's arrest, a seemingly reasonable solution is reached, whereby the Romanian authorities make it clear that they would be willing to release Pintori if the Italian authorities would also release Dobre. This is what Ana Pauker would have said to the Italian Minister in Bucharest, Alberto Calisse. The Italian government is launching a true bureaucratic marathon at the highest level, with

the personal involvement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Sforza¹¹ and Internal Affairs, Scelba¹², at the end of which Dobre's release and expulsion are obtained. It is anxiously expected that the Romanian side will respect its commitment and proceed with the release of Gatti and Pintori or at least Pintori.

However, the Romanian government closes the dialogue and, once Dobre is released and repatriated, it goes on to prosecute Pintori and Father Gatti in the famous trial of the Vatican spies in Romania. Consumed between September 10-17, 1951, it was held at the Military Court of Bucharest, being one of the most publicized trials of the 50s, the head of the court being General Alexandru Petrescu.

There were ten accused, as follows: Augustin Pacha, Roman Catholic Bishop of Timișoara, Iosif Schubert, clandestine Bishop, parish of „St. Joseph” Cathedral in Bucharest, Adalbert Boros, clandestine Bishop, rector of Theological Seminary in Timișoara, Clemente Gatti, rector of the Italian Church in Bucharest, Ioan Heber, the secretary of the Diocese of Timisoara, Iosif Waltner, the head of the Episcopal Chancellery of Timisoara, Eraldo Pintori, the official of the Italian Legation in Bucharest, Lazăr Stefanescu and Gheorghe Sandulescu, the President and Vice-president of the Socialist Christian Party, which was illegal at the time, respectively the doctor Petre Topa, former Undersecretary of state during the interwar period. They were accused of treason and conspiracy, carried out „in the service of the Vatican” and „the Italian spy center”. The punishments administered by General Petrescu were „exemplary”, five of the defendants being sentenced to hard work for life, and the other five to terms between 10 and 18 years. Bishop Joseph Schubert was sentenced to life imprisonment, Bishop Pacha (who was 81 years old at the time of arrest) to 18 years imprisonment, Bishop Adalbert Boros to hard work and life imprisonment, Clemente Gatti to 15 years imprisonment, Joseph Waltner to 15 years of hard work, Ioan Heber to 12 years of hard work, and from the laity Petre Țopa to 10

11 Carlo Sforza (1872-1952) was the Italian ministry of Foreign Affairs 1920-1921 and 1947-1951.

12 Mario Scelba (1901-1991) was the Italian Minister of the Interior between February 2, 1947 - July 7, 1953 and the President of the Council of Ministers of Italy from February 10, 1954 until July 6, 1955.

years heavy imprisonment, and the others Gheorghe Săndulescu, Lazăr Ștefănescu and Eraldo Pintori to hard work for life.¹³

The Government of Rome responded to the information regarding the prosecution of Italian citizens through a Declaration and a Verbal Note, both on September 14, 1951. The Declaration is a vibrant and solemn protest against the „*judicial farce*”, of the terror methods used against those affected, by the distortions of the truth and by the deceptive simulations of facts to which the Romanian authorities committed. Any kind of insinuations regarding the subversive or espionage activities of diplomatic agents or Italian citizens are categorically rejected. It is noted that the entire responsibility in the irrevocable deterioration of the relations between the two states must be assumed by Romania. Verbal Note no. 1687 is more detailed and denounces the deceptive attitude of the Bucharest government regarding the simultaneous release of Dobre and Pintori. If the Italian authorities respected the agreement previously established, the Romanian government violated its word using a ridiculous excuse („*the Foreign Ministry could not avoid the trial*”) and showed a gross lack of fairness in international relations. In these circumstances, argues the Rome MFA, there can no longer be the possibility of minimal trust between the parties and no good practices in international relations. The diplomatic document ends with the express request of Eraldo Pintori's release. The Romanian Legation from Rome returned the Verbal Note stating that it cannot receive it due to its content.

But in Bucharest it seems there was only aversion towards Italy, and the peninsular government again saw its strategy of positively approaching the relationship with Bolshevik Romania collapsing, realizing that it had to deal with a dangerous overthrow of the set of values on which interstate and international relations are built. For now, the communists in Romania had managed to turn the accusation of espionage against the Holy See and Italy, by massively publishing it in Romania and in the communist countries, while regarding Dobre's activity there were only a few characters from the high Italian hierarchy who were aware of the affair.

13 The propagandistic importance of the farce process is portrayed by the editing of the official variant of the unfolding of this negative event in bi and multilateral relations, *Procesul unui grup de spioni, trădători și complotiști în slujba Vaticanului și a Centrului de spionaj italian, - București, 10-17 septembrie 1951 -*, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură Științifică, 1952, 120 p. The print, consistent at the time, was 15100 copies.

At the meetings of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the sentences of Gatti and Pintori, who were Italian citizens, and under the wing of the Legation, in November 1951 the Bucharest authorities respond to the complaints of the government of Rome in a mercantile way, demonstrating, without any embarrassment, which is the status of the sentences (and consequently the basis of the investigation files) of the communist justice. The Italian Minister in Bucharest, Alberto Calisse has successive meetings with Ana Toma, Ana Pauker's deputy, and with the general director Balanescu. The Government of Bucharest sends Calisse two ministerial sheets, without a header and without signatures or other signs of legitimacy, which explains the blackmailing way of considering the expulsion of Eraldo Pintori and, obviously, resizing the evaluation of the Gatti case. In order to produce such a review of the quality of the bilateral reports, it was necessary for the Italian authorities to respond as quickly as possible to the requests from Bucharest, which were as follows: The Accademia di Romania should not be confiscated by the Roman authorities and the Romanian custody of the building should be accepted; signing an agreement between the Romanian and Italian governments¹⁴ exempting state assets from conservative seizure following the model of article 12 of the Swiss-Romanian Agreement of August 3, 1951; lifting the seizure instituted by the Italian justice on the Romanian actions of A.P.I.R. (Azienda Petrolifera Italo-Romena)¹⁵; the return to Romania of the Romanian property gold (Maritime Danube Direction) deposited at the Italian Commercial Bank (120 kg); unlocking some Romanian accounts in Italian banks (about 80 million pounds). We repeat, all these requests have been submitted to the Italian side typed on simple ministerial sheets lacking authentication and legitimacy. This was the level of negotiation in international relations that Ana Pauker stooped to.

14 Amending the Commercial and Payment Agreement signed on November 25, 1950.

15 This problem will accompany until the end of the bilateral crisis both the Accademia di Romania issue and the Eraldo Pintori case. The history of the problem is post-war: in 1947 Azienda Petrolifera Italo-Romena with wholly Romanian shareholding through the Mining Credit, the largest oil company in Romania, started a discussion in which it was willing to transfer FIAT 50% of the A.P.I.R. shares for an amount of 175 million Italian pounds, partially used for the purchase of vehicles and other FIAT materials to be used in Romania. The agreement was concluded on January 11, 1947. In Romania, however, the transaction was challenged. FIAT supported the total clarity of the completed transaction, but agreed with a new renegotiation, which ended on September 27, 1947. By renegotiation, the Mining Credit remained with the 50% of the shares, but obliged to provide the Italian partner with oil for exploitation, the latter paying in mechanical and steel products. However, the Romanian side did not take this agreement into account either by asking too high prices for oil, or by selling it on the Italian market, bypassing A.P.I.R.

The Italian executive was faced with a rather thorny situation. Many of the questions asked by the Romanian side were elements dependent on private authorities or which were subject to judicial procedures on which the government of Rome could interfere only by violating the constitutional attributions of the executive, which was impossible to achieve.

The Bucharest authorities were looking for all the economic resources that the Romanian state or the private Romanian citizens with the nationalized assets had stored or employed abroad. Pintori and Gatti, on par with the Accademia di Romania, were elements that could provide fresh air to the Romanian administration strangled by the Soviets.

Rome replied to the Romanian government that after Pintori's release, all other elements could be discussed through diplomatic negotiations. Feeling that it stretched the rope too much, the Romanian MFA made the decision, at the beginning of January 1952, to announce, however, the release of the Accademia di Romania palace and transfer to another building, but suggesting to the authorities in Rome not to proceed with the confiscation of the Academy because when a bilateral cultural agreement can be signed, it will again be the seat of cultural-educational activities. At the same time, the Romanian diplomacy argued that the denunciation of the bilateral cultural agreement does not concern the building of the Academy that was built in another bilateral political context and, consequently, Romania is still the rightful owner. In Bucharest, the initial legal condition was eluded obstinately, which unequivocally established the uninterrupted and unaffected cultural destination of the Accademia di Romania.

Considering the projected release of the Academy from the presence of diplomats through the Verbal Note no. 4/1107/1 of February 1, 1952, the Romanian diplomatic representation was informed by the

...The situation got complicated when the Etablissement Investment et Valor Company from Liechtenstein won a lawsuit in Vaduz with a favorable sentence against the Mining Credit of 350 million pounds and obtained on February 3, 1949, in order to recover the amount, a conservative seizure of the A.P.I.R. shares from the Genoa Court of Appeal (it became effective on April 27, 1949), until the final resolution solution (recognition of the effects of a sentence from abroad). On January 26, 1952, the Genoa Court of Appeal recognized its incompetence in this case. The case went to the Rome Court of Appeal, but Valor demanded a new seizure in Rome, against which the Mining Credit, absorbed in Sovrompetrol which transferred the A.P.I.R. shares to SOCOP Bucharest, filed an appeal. The Court of Cassation in Rome annulled the sentence from Genoa on November 9, 1953. The package claimed by Bucharest was half of the 9000 shares, each with a nominal value of 1000 Italian pounds (9 million pounds), but with a commercial value of 400 million pounds.

decision of the Italian MFA regarding the communication of the day and time at which it will be obliged to surrender the palace of the Academy of Romania to the local authorities. The Academy, by vacating the diplomats, was losing that bit of extraterritoriality that had been plucked by force from the Italians.

However, the strongest signal was given on February 7, 1952, when the president of the Council of Ministers of Italy, Alcide de Gasperi, in his capacity as Minister of Foreign Affairs communicated to the head of the Italian diplomatic representation in Bucharest the response to the Romanian requests of November 19, 1951. De Gasperi informs that if the government of Bucharest requests so many repairs in a problem of political process, it should also take a look at its own management of confiscated and nationalized Italian goods in Romania, on which it does not do even the most innocent of references. Regarding the concrete elements related to the A.P.I.R. case, de Gasperi firmly argues that it is a subject of justice, on which the government cannot interfere. He is equally firm on the issue of the agreement between the Romanian and the Italian government exempting state assets from conservative seizure, claiming that it is in contradiction with the basic rules of Italian law. The only concession the Italian Prime Minister is willing to make would be a possible permit for the Romanian side to import goods from Italy at better rates for „*the strict necessities of national needs*”. If the Bucharest government does not respond positively to the Pintori issue, the commercial relations between the two countries will be blocked at the disposal of the Italian Prime Minister. Demonstrating intransigence, De Gasperi orders Rome’s Ministry of Foreign Trade to temporarily suspend Italian exports to Romania until new provisions regarding the evolution of bilateral political relations. There is, in De Gasperi’s message, no reference to the Accademia di Romania, because, according to the latest decisions, the City Hall of Rome had to take possession of it.

In a meeting held by Mircea Bălănescu with Alberto Calisse, the Italian Minister in Bucharest, as reported in the telegram no. 1686 of February 9, 1952, the Romanian official shows that, in connection with the Pintori case, the Romanian authorities are willing to negotiate on all levels and issues transmitted to the Italian counterparts, but that there is a Romanian interest on the one hand, for commercial access on the Italian market, and on the other hand, to keep the Accademia di Romania. Subsequently, in the telegram no. 1737 of February 21, 1952 and in a

telespresso no. 336 of February 25, 1952, the Italian MFA informs the Bucharest representative that there is availability from Rome to suspend for a while the decision to take over the Academy of Romania and even to accept that after its emptying, without being used, it will remain in custody and preservation of the Romanian Legation in Rome. This step had become necessary as the opening of another dispute front in bilateral relations was increasingly seen. The Bucharest government could raise the stake again: in addition to the imprisonment of Gatti and Pintori, Romanians could also aspire to the Italian state's properties in Romania.

This is the time when the Bucharest government decides to do a „goodwill” act. Considering that there is a real possibility of a scandal with international echoes, which could affect Italy, the country with the largest Communist party beyond the Iron Curtain, given the health status of Father Gatti, the Bucharest cabinet decides, on April 9, 1952, that the seriously ill priest to be visited in prison by the Italian Minister in Bucharest, Alberto Calisse. The Italian diplomat was able to see concretely what is the destructive capacity of the Romanian prison system, the priest's body being martyred by the tortures and hardships he was subjected to. The next day he is released from prison, hosted by the Italian Legation for a few days, after which he was allowed to leave for Vienna. He died, two month later, in his native Italy. Calisse informs his superiors, on April 12, 1952 (telespresso 503/285), that although it was about the release of Pintori in the first place, it seems that the nomenclature in Bucharest appreciated „our kind attitude” in the case of the Academy and had made the Gatti concession.

One month later, on May 10, 1952, the Romanian Legation in Italy informs the Romanian authorities that starting with May 12, 1952, it will function at a different address. However, it is stated that „Regarding the premises of the Accademia di Romania in Rome ... according to the discussions that took place between the Romanian government and the Italian government and according to those communicated by the Italian minister in Bucharest, Alberto Calisse from the Italian government during the hearing that he was granted on March 13, 1952, this premises, owned by the Romanian state, will remain closed, and the Legation will keep the keys and will handle the maintenance to keep the building in good condition”. It was hoped, in a hypocritical way, that „the functioning of the Academy could be resumed as soon as the Romanian and Italian states would agree on this subject”.

The Government of Rome's response is contained in the Verbal Note no. 5298/18 of May 30, 1952, where it expresses satisfaction in relocating the headquarters of the Romanian Legation, but it is specified, regarding the Accademia di Romania, that: "*the communication made by Minister Calisse to the Romanian government must be understood in the framework of complex negotiations for the relaxation of the Romanian-Italian relations, especially through the release of Eraldo Pintori, held in Romanian prisons*". In view of this specification, the Italian MFA informs the Government of Bucharest that: "*it is willing to postpone the exercise of its attributions on the edifice, and the building once vacated by the Legation to be kept, without any destination in the custody and preservation of the Romanian Legation*". The Verbal Note concludes that these agreements entered into through the diplomatic document will be functional only after Eraldo Pintori's release and his expulsion from Romania.

However, the negotiations continue, as we are informed from Calisse's discussion with Balănescu at the beginning of September 1952, when we find out that the situation of the Academy was considered closed or at least stabilized within the agreed parameters a few months before, but that the release of Pintori does not depend only by ignoring the Italian property on the Academy, but also by the other questions asked: modification of the article in the commercial agreement, the A.P.I.R. affair and other concessions that Romania could obtain.

The year 1953 opens in the dynamics of bilateral relations with a new material request of Romania towards Italy. This is a new concession that Italy has to make in order to solve the Pintori case. From three internal notes dated April 27, May 19 and July 1, 1953, we are informed, in the context of the resumption of bilateral commercial activity, of a request that Romania sent to Italy at the beginning of the year to buy Romanian wheat, an amount of 20,000 tons, at a higher price than the one from the world grain market. The Ministry of Finance from Rome agrees to purchase the 20,000 tonnes of wheat from Romania with the following conditions: "*not to set a precedent and to have the certainty of Pintori's release*".

The changes from the year 1953, Stalin's death, and in Italy the fall of the De Gasperi government in August 1953, made the negotiations enter a lethargic phase. The pace of Italian justice in the A.P.I.R. case did not encourage boosting the discussions. The situation is unlocked at the initiative of the Italian side, eager to see Pintori free, in February 1954.

On February 25, Simion Bughici¹⁶, Ana Pauker's successor, receives the audience of Italy's Minister in Bucharest, Calisse¹⁷. Calisse reported that the entire conversation with Bughici was marked by the tendency of the Romanian dignitary to elude any reference to the Pintori case, the Communist minister raising the issue of „anti-Romanian” propaganda in the Italian newspapers. Also, the Minister of Foreign Affairs insisted that the fundamental problem in the case of bilateral relations is the trade between the two countries, implying that Eraldo Pintori is insignificant, opinion at the antipode of Italian political interests.

However, the Bughici-Calisse discussion is not without its consequences. On March 26, 1954, the Italian Minister in Bucharest informs, by telegram no. 3157, that Mircea Bălănescu called to inform him of the reopening of the negotiations on the Pintori case. The Romanian Government proposed the following steps: a Verbal Note reconfirming that the Accademia di Romania is the custody of the Romanian state; an exchange of Verbal Notes specifying the modification of article 12 of the commercial agreement: solving the A.P.I.R. problem by asking the Rome Court of Appeal for the ineffectiveness of the seizure of shares. The answer is given to Calisse by Vittorio Zoppi, who reiterates that the problem of the Accademia di Romania, of the negotiations on the commercial agreement remain within the parameters established in 1952, regarding the A.P.I.R. issue, being no objections, is awaiting the evolution of the situation. However, all positive developments are subject to Pintori's release.

A telespresso from July 8, 1954, written by Italy's businessman in charge of a.i. in Bucharest, Tiberi, reports that at the celebration of the National Day of the United States of America organized in Bucharest on July 4, 1954, he was approached by Bălănescu, who suggested that Romania intends to liquidate the Pintori subject as soon as possible, and for this reason it is needed a fast solution for the A.P.I.R. affair. Moreover, Bălănescu raised by saying that the Romanian authorities, running out of patience, would sell the disputed business to an Italian

16 Simion Bughici (December 25, 1914 - February 1, 1997) was a politician and Romanian Communist diplomat, ethnically Jewish, originally from Basarabia. He held the position of Romanian Ambassador to Moscow (1949-1952). Later, in 1952, he succeeded Anna Pauker as Minister of Foreign Affairs between July 1952 - October 1955. In 1961 he was attached to the Economic Directorate of the CC in PMR.

17 Telespresso n. 1013/504 sent by the Italian Legation in Bucharest, on July 21, 1952.

state or parastatal entity, be it FIAT itself and thus it would come out of the vicious circle. Tiberi told Bălănescu that his request did not have the economic consistency that they hoped (about one million dollars, the Romanian side owning half of the seized shares) the company being liquidated. Bălănescu replied that all these discussions should be done calmly in Rome, but that it is a solution that the Romanian side would accept. Tiberi can not help noticing with sarcasm that „*this is actually the ransom for Pintori's head*”. The only thing that Tiberi would evaluate positively, in this unfortunate deal for the Italian state, would be the fall of the request of the Romanian party regarding the modification of the Italian-Romanian Trade Agreement.

Subsequent evolutions sanctioned those set forth in the Tiberi-Balanescu discussion. From another internal summary Note of the Directorate-General for Political Affairs, dated December 22, 1954, we are updated with the latest developments in the negotiations regarding Pintori's release from June to December 1954. Thus, we find that compared to the initial requests from November 1951, at which had been added over the years yet another that was an application of the principle of reciprocity regarding the visa policy and the amount of the Romanian Legation's staff in Rome, the only issue that prevented Pintori's release and the acceptance by the Romanian side of the Academia di Romania was, of course, the A.P.I.R. affair - The Mining Credit.

The Italian authorities appealed to FIAT's aid, which owned half of the A.P.I.R. shares - The Mining Credit. FIAT had an interest in taking possession of the A.P.I.R. goods consisting of fuel storage installations and gas distribution facilities valued at around 400 million pounds. An exchange of letters on December 21 and December 28, 1954, the first belonging to Michele Scammacca, the head of the Protocol from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the second to Vittorio Valletta¹⁸, president of FIAT, confirms the negotiations between the Italian government and the industrial giant for Pintori's release. FIAT specifies that it undertakes tasks that are not comfortable for them, but it does so in the direction of ensuring the success of the Italian Foreign Ministry.

Although Rome proceeded immediately to plan Pintori's release in detail, it was in vain, because, probably, the time required to transfer

18 Vittorio Valletta (28 iulie 1883 – 10 august 1967) was an Italian entrepreneur, between 1921 and 1967, acting as director, general manager, managing director and president of FIAT industrial concern.

the money from FIAT to Bucharest took more time than was expected. Only one document tells us that at the end of March, things were not yet unlocked. In an address of the Italian Protocol to the Directorates-General for Political Affairs and Economic Affairs, from March 25, 1955, a point of view is requested regarding the pressures made by the Romanian MFA for the accreditation in Italy of an attache to the Legation named Radu Stefan. It is mentioned in the note that, up to the time of writing the address, the Italian Protocol delayed the agreement for Radu Stefan pending the „desired resolution of the known issue related to the Pintori case”.

The Romanian side finally kept its promise. Just over two weeks after the above document, without notice, Eraldo Pintori was released. The details of Pintori's release are from his own account, which is recorded in the form of a report to the Rome Ministry of Foreign Affairs, published in the meantime in Italian¹⁹. The Italian authorities had no way of knowing exactly when Pintori would be released, the case of the Legation officer being particularly different from the Gatti case. Pintori reports that: *„In January 1955, two officers from the Security came to Pitești. They told me that they did not abandon my correspondence in a dusty closet, but that they had studied it for a long time, and the Romanian authorities realized that I was a victim of my superiors and that, therefore, if I had signed an application addressed to the Head of State, prepared by them beforehand, my conditions would have improved and then my release would not be excluded. They added that the Security has „a meter that is 100 cm, but in some cases it can be 150 cm, but also 25”. I interpreted that their request was merely an accusation of espionage towards the Italian authorities and that it probably aimed to arrest other persons.... . In this request it was specified on the other hand that if I was granted a pardon I would have requested asylum from the Romanian authorities refusing to return to Italy, a country subjected to the Anglo-American imperialism. I categorically refused to sign such a document, and, notwithstanding the promise made, by a statement signed in advance not to declare anything to anyone regarding the interrogation techniques and about the trial, I told these officers with richness of details all the sufferings I endured during the investigation and how I was forced to sign certain statements. Hearing this, the Security officers drew my attention*

19 Although, officially, the memo was declassified after 2006, there is a published version, for non-profit purpose, *Memorie di Eraldo Pintori carcerato in Romania*, presentazione del P.F. Molinari M.S., Editrice La Salette, 1992, 56 p.

to the fact that I was committing a serious outrage against the Romanian justice system and that I would suffer the proper consequences. Whatever these consequences were, in the state of despair in which I found myself it had no importance for me to write on paper what I said.

I went back to the cell and waited to be punished, but by April no one was interested in me. It was Good Friday and together with some priests in detention we remembered the Lord's sacrifice on Mount Golgotha. The cell door opened at one point and an officer came in looking at me, but he didn't want to be seen by my colleagues that he was looking for me. He found an excuse to get me out, accusing me of not standing up when he entered the cell. He told me to take my luggage because my gesture was punished with ten days in solitary. I stepped out and he took me to an office where he handed me over to some officers who had come by car from Bucharest. When they got me in the car they blindfolded me and I thought it was time for me to answer for the statements made in January. I managed to slightly lift the blindfold and I realized that we were going to Bucharest, where we arrived after two hours. I was brought into the Ministry of Interior building, where I was locked in a cell until the next morning, when an officer came asking me if I am E.P. (in the investigation rooms the officers do not know the names of the prisoners, only the initials). After confirming my identity, he blindfolded me and took me to a room where I received a pair of pants to replace mine which were torn because i did not receive any clothes during the detention period. He then took me to the barbershop and then led me to an office where there was a colonel and two majors. The colonel gave me a cigarette and, after asking me if I had any heart issues, he informed me that the President of the Romanian People's Republic²⁰ decided to release me. The colonel added that such a decision is an act of great generosity that will be appreciated by the Italian government and that he hoped that my return to the homeland would not be exploited by the press to launch a new degrading campaign against Romania and the working class in general. After that he asked me to sign a declaration that I had to leave Romania in 24 hours and not have any contact with Romanian citizens, both during my stay in Bucharest and during my trip.

I signed the document, I was again blindfolded and he gave me to the officer who brought me in. He got me in the car and drove me randomly around town. At one point the car stopped and the officer told me to get out.

20 So it was in the text

He let me out somewhere in the center, about two kilometers away from our Legation, to which I arrived by taxi.

Through the intervention of the man in charge of business dott. Cerchione, the Romanian authorities extended the departure period by four days because the health did not allow me to make the trip that evening. I left Bucharest on the evening of April 12, 1955. In the train, I realized that the position of my cabin was between two cabins occupied by Security officers. I stayed locked in the cabin, without going out, until the border”.

From Pintori's report, we find that the Security, even after all the possible material repairs for the release of the Italian citizen had been obtained, did not cease to accuse the Italian authorities in Bucharest of espionage and plotting against the state order. We can speak of self-defense reflex of the repressive body, but the pressures put on Pintori to incriminate his superiors, even after all the desired material advantages were obtained, show how common was the Security's lack of moral conduct in those years, a congruent matter with the institutional philosophy of a substantially repressive structure.

The Pintori case is an extremely serious example of damaging the dignity of a person benefiting from diplomatic immunities, beyond the condition of an ordinary citizen. This episode highlighted how bad the physiognomy of a Communist state can be, which balances the human dignity of a foreign citizen without guilt versus material advantages obtained at the political level through blackmail. This is why exorcising the happenings of the obsessive decade is still needed more than ever.

ANEXĂ²¹

TELEPRESSO URGENTE

Al Ministero degli Affari Esteri
ROMA

N. 013

Bucarest, addì 2 maggio 1951

Oggetto: Aresto impiegato Eraldo Pintori

Come ho già riferito con il telegramma nr. 38, la Polizia romana ha proceduto nel pomeriggio del 27 aprile all'improvviso arresto dell'impiegato locale di questa Legazione, Sig. Eraldo Pintori.

L'arresto è avvenuto nei pressi della sua abitazione, mentre egli si accingeva a venire in ufficio. Gli agenti si erano recati poco prima in casa sua con un pretesto qualsiasi, ma si erano allontanati subito passando in un edificio attiguo. Allorchè il Pintori è uscito poco dopo di casa, un agente che si era nascosto nel giardino antistante l'ha rincorso e gli ha ordinato di seguirlo. Sembrerebbe quindi evidente il proposito della Polizia romana di voler arrestare il Pintori senza lasciare traccia e noi ci troveremo ora di fronte alla sua scomparsa, se la di lui moglie non avesse potuto assistere alla scena. Ciò lascia pure ritenere che la Polizia stessa abbia agito senza essere munita di mandato di cattura.

Il Pintori che presta servizio presso questa Legazione dall'ottobre 1948, dopo essere stato per 13 anni segretario del cessato Istituto di Cultura, era stato recentemente trasferito com'è noto a codesto Ministero – a Beirut e, ultimate le consuete complesse pratiche (fra l'altro, questo Ministero degli Esteri ha fatto attendere il visto di uscita per ben 17 giorni ed un'altra decina di giorni per l'autorizzazione ad esportare il suo mobilio), si accingeva a partire il 2 maggio per l'Italia insieme alla propria moglie.

Il suo arresto è giunto quindi di sorpresa, benchè fosse risultato chiaro che le Autorità romene cercavano di indagare sulla precedente attività di Pintori prima di lasciarlo partire e benchè egli stesso avesse avuto sentore già nei mesi

21 The document is kept in Archivio Storico-Diplomatico, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma, Affari Politici 1950-1957, Romania, 1954, pacco 1248.

scorsi che la sua presenza in Romania era oggetto di particolare vigilanza da parte della Polizia. Il che lo aveva anche indotto a chiedere alla Legazione nel gennaio u.s. di essere incluso nella lista degli impiegati da proporre a codesto Ministero per il trasferimento in altra sede.

Le mansioni di Pintori, che è un impiegato capace, laborioso e devoto al servizio, consistevano soprattutto nello sbrigare le numerose pratiche, che sono qui indispensabili per la vita del personale della Legazione, con il Protocollo del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, con l'Ufficio controllo degli stranieri, con le dogane, con le case di spedizione, ecc. Egli aveva quindi molti contatti esterni per necessità d'ufficio, ai quali sono da aggiungere quelli privati che egli teneva ancora con romeni della vecchia classe dirigente, da lui conosciuti attraverso la sua lunga permanenza nel Paese (nato a Lavena di Varese nel 1915, è venuto in Romania nel 1925) ed il suo servizio presso l'Istituto di Cultura.

È mia impressione che lo stesso Ministero degli Affari Esteri sia disarmato di fronte ai provvedimenti presi dalla polizia segreta del Ministero degli Interni e che i funzionari temano di poter incorrere in qualche pericolo e biasimo se mostrano troppo zelo in favore di stranieri dei paesi occidentali.

Mentre mi riservo di riferire ulteriormente, prego di considerare se non sia il caso di svolgere anche presso la Legazione di Romania in Roma qualche energico passo analogo a quelli qui fatti.

Alberto Calisse