

**THE BROTHERS OF THE
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN ROMANIA
A century's presence and growth (2/2)**

**Brothers Tiberiu (George Romulus) Rata
and Francisco Martín**

VI. THE SENTENCES.

One of the sentences, number 1,252-1958, came from the Military Tribunal in Bucharest and it condemned one of the Brothers. Among many other accusations are the following:

- To have continued with daily activities according to the rule of his Congregation which had been prohibited and dissolved.
- To have given daily education of a reactionary nature to young people.
- To have taken part in some spiritual exercises in the house at number 19 Popov Street.
- To have been involved in Catechesis, religion classes for young students at the St. Teresa (sic) Cathedral of the Bellu Cemetery of Bucharest.
- To have been involved in mystical and religious instruction in religion classes previously.
- To have given Marxist-Leninist teachings and been involved with reactionary causes about life and the world.
- In several dialogues with these religious from the FSC religious order, they have clearly shown that they would change the popular democratic order in the hope that they might enjoy previous privileges.
- To have affirmed that they would permit the teaching of religion in their schools; they had also mentioned to others that in order to educate students in the popular democratic state schools it would only be necessary to imitate Soviet methods.
- To have affirmed that afterwards there would be much more freedom.
- To have praised, among other events, the technology and the knowledge of capitalistic states.
- To have spread other religious news heard on imperialist radios as well as other news not favorable to the popular democratic regime.

For these reasons and others like them Brothers Augustine and Dominic were sentenced to 20 years of forced labor and Brothers Tiberio and Florentin were sentenced to 15 years.

Happily, the sentences were not completely fulfilled since after 6 years, in 1964, the sentences were reduced to time served.

Before this happened, on April 24, 1959, nine Brothers who were still free were forcefully taken from the St. Joseph

Cloister by members of the "security personnel" and brought to the Prefect of Bucharest. There they were divided into three groups and sent to homes.

The older Brothers, Boniface, Silvester and Julius, were escorted to the Franciscan Monastery of Estelnic near Tirgu Secuiesc in the Brasov province.

Brothers Damian, Marcellus and Englehard were taken to Viisoara-Slohozia in the Ialomita province while Brothers Athanasius, Valentine and Christian were taken to Olam in the Calarasi province.

These Brothers were also the beneficiaries of a sentence reduction in 1964 and they were able to return home to their families or to their friends except for Brother Julius Blei who had a gangrene leg amputated in 1962. He passed away in 1963 and was buried at the Estelnic Monastery.

In summary, Brothers Justin and Tarsicio each were in prison for 15 years, the most of any of the Brothers. The rest, who were younger, were liberated in 1964 without having completed their sentences.

VII. LIFE PRESSES ON.

The happiness that was enjoyed due to the 1964 decree was not very long-lasting. The governmental decree ordered those persons who were liberated to return to the places where they had originally been arrested. The Brothers obeyed this order and again suffered since they were not able to live in community. Each did what he could to survive. Some were welcomed by families in Bucharest; others returned to their places of birth; and still others claimed their German ancestry in order to emigrate to Austria or Germany.

In spite of promises of obtaining an official post as they had been prepared for, they soon saw that this would be impossible. Some Brothers could not obtain a teaching post once it was known that they had been imprisoned. After a time they were declared "unqualified workers".

Another difficulty was finding appropriate lodging. Also they were still being followed, especially in the first years after their release and they were aware that any contact they made was immediately reported to the political police.

The Brother superiors in Vienna did everything in their power to contact these Brothers and visit them and give them needed aid. In 1964 Brother Liebhard, Visitor, tried to get the Romanian authorities to allow the Rumanian Brothers establish themselves in Austria but he was flatly denied permission to do so.

VIII. THE HARSH REALITY.

The Brothers were little by little being stuck in jobs which permitted them to live modestly, remain faithful to their vocation, although the lifestyle was very difficult.

Brother Damian Bacos, in Alba Julia, was a professor at the Roman Catholic Theological Institute from 1967 to 1992 and then he managed to rejoin the community of Brothers in Oradea.

Brother Augustine work in Bucharest at the Chancellery Office of the Catholic Bishop until his retirement in 1977.

Brother Marcellus worked as an organist and catechetics teacher at the parish in Popesti-Leordeni.

Brother Athanasius continued working in Modelu as an assistant surveyor.

Brother Tarsicio worked as a housing administrator for the Drumul Taberei neighborhood while living at his sister's house.

Brother Tiberius settled in Baia Mare; the first six years he worked at the department of forestry and later he worked at the central mine until his retirement in 1986.

In 1978, the then Vicar, Brother John Johnston, visited the Brothers.

In 1970 Brother Tarsicio was granted permission to visit Vienna, Rome and Paris. His second request, two years later, was denied.

In 1983, Brother Augustine and Tiberius spent a month in Vienna. In 1984 Brother Macellus visited Vienna and Rome as did Brother Athanasius in 1989. Brother Damian managed to visit Vienna in 1990.

IX. IN SATUMARE: DECLINE.

Since the 1960s the Brothers continued to decline.

In 1964 Brother Gellert died as did Brother Gyula in 1967. Other Brothers who passed away there were: Brother Kristof, in 1977, who had been the Director of the teacher training college; Brother Bodog in 1983; Brother Fryges in 1985, former Director of the primary school.

X. NEW HOPES.

During the 1990 Holy Week Brothers Damian, Athanasius and Tiberius met with the Brother Superior General in Vienna.

It was decided there that three Brothers would go to Iasi to open a community in the hopes of revitalizing the Institute in Romania. Support was received from the Spanish Districts of the Spain-Portugal Region.

So on September 11, 1991, the first three Spanish Brothers from the Districts of Madrid, Valladolid and Valencia

arrived. They were Brothers Francisco Martín, Jesús Sagredo and José Luis Miró, respectively. The following year another three Brothers came from the Districts of Barcelona, Seville and Bilbao: Brothers Antonio Perera, Angel Menacho and Antxon Andueza.

Brothers José Luis Miró and Angel Menacho stayed for one year and were replaced by Brothers Juan Antonio Esteban and Juan Barrera.

The first community opened at number 2 Titu Maiorescu Street (formerly Puskin). Although the first order of the day was to get to know the Romanian culture and language, Brother Francesco Martín obtained a position as a teacher of Spanish in the Philology Department at the "Al. I. Cuza" University and was later officially recognized as a lecturer in Spanish.

On October 1, 1993, a second community was opened in Pildesti with Brothers Jesús Sagredo, Director, Antonio Perera and Antxon Andueza. The Brothers teach religion classes at the Pildesti and Gheraesti schools and help in other ministry tasks with the young people of both parishes. On Saturdays they offer various courses at the Theological Institute for lay people in the neighboring city of Roman.

On September 1, 1994, a Scholasticate community was opened with Brothers Juan Barrera, Director and Tiberius. The rest of the community includes the two scholastics, Brothers Josif Beda and Daniel Ciobanu.

In October, 1991, a community was opened in Oradea with Brothers Athanasius and Marcellus. In 1992 they were joined by Brother Damian who came from Alba Julia; Brother Thomas Voss came in 1995. Some of the Brothers from this community work in the boarding department of the Greek-Catholic Pedagogical school of Oradea. Brother Damian is the prefect of studies and theology professor and Brother Thomas Voss teaches German, religion and history in the number 10 school in Oradea. •