

**ANTONESCU AND THE AXIS - BEYOND "CLOSED DOORS".
MARGINALIA TO THE VOLUME "THE THIRD MAN OF THE
AXIS" BY GH. BARBUL**

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*"Ask yourself what you did wrong,
the day when you are left without your enemies."
Nicolae Iorga*

In the history of Romania, in its economic history, the period 1940-1945 has been examined a lot: numerous articles, studies, books, memory volumes, remembrances and books on war, albums, "white books"... political life, the Diktat and the territorial rapt, the economy, the war and its horrors... anti-Semitic measures and policies, dire crimes, war economy, memories and the facts of military conflicts and fights...

Here are only a few names of great historians and economist researchers - Florin Constantiniu and Gheorghe Buzatu, but also Aurică Simion, Marin Preda and Ioan Lăncrănjan, writers, N.N. Constantinescu, Iulian Văcărel, Nicolae Marcu, Gh. Dobre, economist professors, Vlad Georgescu, a journalist, director of "Europa Liberă" for Romania, and Liviu Vălenaș, and many, many others. Under the aspect of thoughts, of facts as such, here are the "top" leaders of the period – the two Antonescu, first Marshall Ion Antonescu, "the red dog" (he was red-haired and was very strict), also Minister Council Vice President of the time, Mihai Antonescu, International Rights Professor, and King Mihai and his group – whose partners and close friends wrote important memorialistic books.

These were not few, some printed, others, not yet. I cannot mention them all, but however, I lay and accent on the ones recently read or re-read: Gh. Magherescu "the Truth about Marshall Ion Antonescu" (3 volumes);

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Constantin Pantazi "Going to Death with the Marshall"; Radu Lecca "I Saved the Jews in Romania"; Eugen Cristescu "Some of Eugen Cristescu's "Memories" – see Emil Streinu "The Romanian Secret Service of Information" etc. I hereby notice a work in particular: Gheorghe Barbul, "The Third Man of the Axis", whose protagonist is the General and, afterwards, Marshall Ion Antonescu.

1. Further on, we will mainly refer to this volume. And here is why: the ones who knew them and had something to say about the two Antonescu are very numerous. Few are the ones that, professionally, had to do with them. And extremely few are the ones who actually were day and night close friends. Gheorghe Barbul is in part, most evidently, one included in the last category. He was, for years, Chief of Board and direct partner of Mihai Antonescu but also the Marshall's Private Secretary. He had, therefore, reasons, to confess about them. Moreover, several, from those remembered, published their books in the country, in the regime before December 1989. And from these, not few wrote them in jail, some "discretely" and others under the direct supervision of security: Constantin Pantazi, Radu Lecca, Eugen Cristescu etc. Gheorghe Barbul managed to leave the country in August 1947, with "the last train", before the great wrath, with a passport, and since then he lived in Paris, France. Here, he first published his basic volume in "Couronne" Publishing House, in 1950. He documented himself from his own memory – completely remarkable, in our opinion – but also from various newspapers and war publications from the French libraries. The volume was translated and published in Romania in 1991 and now, in 2020 in "Paul Editons".

When he published his volume in France, Gh. Barbul was already, for a long time, a mature and a free man: he had no reasons to fear the communist censorship, the longer or shorter arm of security forces. He could, thus, talk and write not gossips, but thoughts and facts lived alive. Direct confessions. By including them, we may give him, therefore, consistent credit. He would conceive and draw office documents, he would attend all the "boss's" meetings, including the ones with Hitler, he knew perfectly well what was "behind the closed doors", he knew about the doubts and worries of the two, he would work on their speeches. He knew the world with their eyes and with his own... Nevertheless, he was on one side during the times and this is,

however, felt in the volume. It is the very author that confesses it in the preface of his book, in 1950: *I belong to the group of the defeated ever since August 23, 1944 and having this quality, I hereby bring testimony. I cannot complain about my fate. I escaped prison and the exile was, from the very first moment, no more difficult than the defeaters'* (the performers of the acts of August 23 – the King and his company, the conspicuous liberals, nationalists, social-democrats, top-military figures were themselves involved...). *From those alive, the King is the only one who hadn't gone to the communist jail. Many of his advisors died in prison.*

Given my political views, my confession may seem subjective. How else could it be? A witness can run away neither from his own opinions, nor from the public he addresses to, and he does not remain indifferent to the atmosphere that surrounds him. A single factor may be invoked in my favour: some treat me like a detractor, others, like Ion Antonescu's apologist. Had I adopted a balanced position between the two extremes, I wonder? Let the reader judge me. I, as his reader, from what I can make of it, think he had.

2. But who was, in more detail, the Romanian diplomate and high State official Gh Barbul? Briefly, he was born once with the previous century: August 22, 1915, in Vârfurile, Arad County. His parents lived in Budapest, his father being main librarian in the National Hungarian Library. After the defeating of Bela Kun's communist troops by the Romanian army, as said by Liviu Vălenaş, his family would move to Transylvania, in Cluj, where Gheorghe attended primary school and his first two classes in high school. His family was reach. He had, among other things, a villa in Predeal, not far away from Marshall Ion Antonescu's villa. Then, young Gheorghe Barbul continued his life in Wien and Paris, where he passed his baccalaureate in 1932. He came back to the country, to his family, attending "Regele Ferdinand I" University in Cluj, where he was awarded the BA diploma in "Law and Economic Politics", a superb award with practical possibilities everywhere. He would continue in Berlin, Germany, attending PhD studies in International and Public Law. It is again Liviu Vălenaş who said that he came back to the country in the Spring of 1940. Besides his education, he was a perfect speaker of Romanian, Hungarian, German, French, having conversations in English and Italian as well. In August 1940 he was named a Secretary for the

Romanian Commission negotiating with Hungary in Turnu Severin, chaired by Valer Pop. As the Commission Secretary, he also joined Mihail Manoilescu, a Minister of the External in Gigurtu Government and Valer Pop in Wien arbitration. After returning to the country, he related Ion Antonescu with Valer Pop, and their actions lead to Carol II's abdication.

At the request of the State Leader, General Ion Antonescu, joined Valer Pop in Berlin, where the latter was sent for the defence of the Northern Transylvania Romanians, which was surrendered, under the Diktat, to Hungary. He weekly commuted between Berlin and Rome and Mihail Manoilescu was commissioned to do the same next to the Italian Government. After this mission ended, he was sent to Budapest to participate in the Romanian – Hungarian negotiations for the application of arbitration in Wien.

Called back to Bucharest at the end of 1940, he was the only civilian who was part of General Antonescu's office, without having a precisely determined position. Beginning his career as a diplomat, as a result of competition, he became a military attaché to the Minister of Foreign Affairs' office, where the position holder was Ion Antonescu and Mihai Antonescu became the acting Minister of this department after the beginning of hostilities on the Eastern Front. His main activity at the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs regarded Romanian-German and Romanian-Italian relationships. He would prepare materials for the discussions held by the State Leaders of the two great Axis powers and he often joined Marshall Antonescu or Mihai Antonescu in their visits to Hitler and Mussolini.

In December 1943, he was sent to Stockholm in order to transmit the plenipotentiary Romanian Minister in the Swedish capital, Frederic Nanu, the instructions of the Bucharest Government with a view to negotiating with the Soviet Union for Romania's war exit. In March 1944, he was sent to Madrid so that he retook, according to indications received from Ion Antonescu and Mihai Antonescu, negotiations with the US Ambassador in order to establish means of exit from the war in the case of Romania. He came back to Bucharest at the beginning of August 1944. On August 22, 1944, Mihai Antonescu asked him to join him in Ankara, for the conclusion of the Armistice with the US, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. When Gheorghe Barbul asked if the mission had the Marshall's approval, Mihai Antonescu would only give an elusive answer. The leaving was scheduled for August 24, 1944 and was thwarted by the document of August 23, 1944, whose

immediate consequences were Ion Antonescu's and Mihai Antonescu's arrests...

As mentioned, in August 1947, he managed to flee abroad. Setting his residence in Paris, he would write several books, among which, the volume entitled *Memorial Antonescu, le III-ieme Homme de l'Axe*, published in the winter of 1950. He lived, together with his wife, for several decades, in the capital of France, earning a living by contributing as a professional journalist to French publications, until his retirement in 1985. After December 1989, he published several books in the country... A man's life in a few lines... But what a life! Many wondered: Did Gh. Barbul have Hungarian origins? The answer does not matter. In my opinion, he was an admirable Romanian: a Latin by temperament and spirit vividness, flexibility, a German by rigour and depth of thought, by the often perfectly logical manner of expression, a French by the elegance of demonstration and prospective spirit, a Hungarian, if you like, by the simplicity and richness of ideas in his writing, by pursuing to finish things with perseverance etc., practically, a European-Romanian, in a certain sense, even if the word connotation is limited. I do not believe to have exaggerated. Nevertheless, from what I have read about him, he was not an anti-Semite.

3. Coming back to the book *The Third Man of the Axis*, the author makes a significant confession in his wish to show, in his opinion, the truth about some years when he directly was in the middle of events. *I sat at my writing desk... due to the manner of describing events I was a witness of, and the people I was given to work for between 1940 -1944, by those who had a word to say in the immediate period after the war, namely the vanquishers. The opponents were qualified either as criminals, or insane, and often both. Even the journals published by the Romanian in the Free World would treat Antonescu as the nation's executioner and his regime as the bloody and horrible "fascist" dictatorship. And abroad, like in the country, the day of August 23 was qualified the national celebration of liberation...* Certainly, there is much to comment on but at the end of the book – he did not excuse anyone, however – you can only appreciate his work, his nuances.

The range of approach within the volume is broad. There are numerous problems. Here are "the Red Dog" (Ion Antonescu); "La Canossa";

“The Great Decision”; “Preliminaries”; “The Weapons Have the Word”; “The Great Adventure”; “From Stalingrad to Rome”; and “Secret Negotiations”; “The Return to Berlin”; “The Last Battle”; “The Iron Curtain Falls”. What mostly kept my attention is not the drawing of portraits – desired by the author to be attentive – like Hitler, Ion Antonescu, Mihai Antonescu, Goga, Brătianu, Maniu, King Mihai, Mussolini, Stalin, Molotov, Horty, Killinger, Clodius, Ismet, İnönü, Ştirbey, Roosevelt, Hayes, Churchill, Ciano, Bova Scoppa, Nedici, and so many others. No. what especially struck me were the examinations that Gh. Barbul drew in the shadow of so many relationships, more or less secret, more or less discrete from the personalities, offices, European embassies and not only. Especially Madrid, Istanbul, Ankara, Cairo, Stockholm, London, Moscow etc. are places that prevail, making it possible for you, the reader, to make an opinion, not necessarily identic with another reader.

Gh. Barbul brings testimony. Certainly, they are the product of his thoughts but also realities that few have known. You, as a reader, may shape conclusions. Why did Ion Antonescu, a consecrated, convinced Anglophile, played on the “card” of Germany, the one who had approved and even stimulated the territorial rapt of Bucovina and Bessarabia by USSR? The one which energetically patronized the Diktat in Wien, being its initiator, napping from Romania a great part of Transylvania holding a Romanian majority of population? The one we heavily fought during the First World War, and which brought harsh theft, up to starvation and ruin, up to death for the occupied territories? The one we concluded peace with in Bucharest, 1918, under heavier, more difficult conditions and we were taken possession of our resources around 1950s? the one... the one..., revigorating P.P. Carp’s and Alexandru Marghiloman’s Germanophile doctrines about 2-3 decades ago. The latter wanted us “to go” as allies with the Central Powers in order to obtain Bessarabia, nevertheless without Transylvania and Bucovina, while the allies (France, England) would support us in our desire to reunify the country. Numerous issues arise.

However, Gh. Barbul asks himself, could Antonescu – the Marshall – have gone another direction trying to prevent the almost total dissolution of the Romanian State? A State which was the ally of a France that almost disappeared? An ally of Great Britain which – as shown in the book – *faute de mieux* accepted us to ally with Germany? We wonder if Antonescu could have gone by the side of a Bolshevik Russia which, like a starving wolf, wanted a larger part of Romania? Or could we have gone by the side of a Nazi

Germany, which, certainly, would have promised Bessarabia and Bucovina while we fought, and, vaguely, Transylvania, when hostilities ended? One would foresee Romania's tragic destiny, but the death of the Romanian State should have been prevented... there were immense sacrifices, a lot of misery, heavy fights on the endless Russian fields, an unshakeable dictatorship, but all these were, practically, the certain Romanian price for Bessarabia and Bucovina. We would discuss about Transylvania afterwards. Certainly, this happened by the side of Hitler "the vanquisher", who would lie to us and to many others very often. Here I have the feeling that we are revealed an important key in the volume. Nevertheless, we might read it differently. The truth is – a fact proven from many other sources – that the German dictator had a certain respect, even sympathy for Ion Antonescu, for his personality as such, of a determined, inflexible cruciate against bolshevism, a blue-eyed Latin, still looking like a German rather than a Latin. Further on, we shall mention several episodes approached in the book in this sense.

4. Especially interesting are "the secret negotiations" inserted in the volume by Diplomat, Journalist and Analyst Gh. Barbul, he being, to a great extent, a direct participant. For example, *Antonescu stated that Hitler had committed the greatest military error making Poland an enemy and not an ally against USSR... Poland's 40 divisions had modified, perhaps, the course of operations in Eastern Europe. The reasons that made Beck and Rydz Smigly partisans of a war against USSR in 1938 were valid for Antonescu in 1944. He used to be badly impressed every time the Germans would speak about "Lebensraum" instead of speaking about the common vital space. It was a serious psychological error. In reality, however, Germany was the only one disposed and capable to fight against the Slavic communist influence in this region... In 1944, in the presence of a Soviet menace, more unpeaceful than ever, to leave Germany without replacing Wehrmacht (as it almost happened, in fact, we note) was the equivalent of suicide. "It is like you jumped from a plane without a parachute", said Marshall Ion Antonescu, supporting his point of view of making an armistice with the ally powers, with the Russians, not by all means, but in favourable conditions for Romania. Our concern for security, Antonescus' (Ion's and Mihai's) opinion, was the only argument which could be invoked in order to exit the alliance with Germany...*

What about controversies with Turkey? Behold: *Finnish Russian discussions, which began in February 1944, were followed with the greatest attention by Axis satellites. They were considered a model of negotiation with USSR... The anxiety that they could be exceeded by two neighbours was very strong in the two Antonescu. The Marshall was afraid of a difficult military situation, for if Bulgaria did not secure the Southern side of Romania, and Hungary the Northern and Western sides, the defence against Russia was irremediably compromised, while Mihai Antonescu was afraid that he committed an error in giving up direct negotiations with Russia... Nothing would come from Madrid... The media, the State people, through public statements, would support the Anglo-Saxon Ambassadors' initiatives in Turkey, in order to determine this country to change its position... Had the allies managed to determine the strait guardians to go into action by their side, then the plans to land in the Balkans, discussed in Madrid, could materialize... in this uneven diplomatic fight, Germany received an indirect and unhelped help: The Soviet Union's... Moscow, in its concern to keep the Anglo-Saxon forces far away from the Balkans, adopts, in the case of Turkey's controversy with the Anglo-Saxons, the attitude of neutralist prudence.* We see, therefore, subtle discussions over noble branded coffee and tea, over expensive beverages, in daily cleaned saloons, with personalities dressed in luxurious tailored suits, hardly ever ending discussions about what is and would be with the front in the Balkans, with the Mediterranean front while soldiers – the Romanian ones in particular, but also the Italian, Hungarian ones etc. – were heavily bleeding and dying in trenches for a cause that was logically and effectively lost. Lost, if not through the stopping of Germans at the gates of Moscow, by all means through the German Romanian hecatomb in Stalingrad, in November-December 1942 and January 1943. The rest was all talk. And here, we understand from Barbul, *an immense error of the Romanian leaders of the time is revealed, who were incapable of "seeing" solutions and acting as such. How could they act? They had thousands and hundreds of thousands of deaths behind, endless suffering and immeasurable sadness.*

The Romanian Government – as shown by Gh. Barbul – by the word of Iuliu Maniu had to endeavor, in the future negotiations, to ensure the State as favourable a statute as possible, in the new order that the vanquishers will set in Europe... Direct negotiations with the Soviet Union were needful. This was, however, also the Marshall's opinion, ready at all times to leave the

ruling to others who were capable. Only that in concrete and risky actions – the Germans might have applied exemplary punishments to them and the country, a great risk for the country, Horia Sima having the luggage ready to come back – not many were heroes. Let us see first, then we shall retract things, retract again and we will afterwards see matters. In all this relative nebula, “democrat” dr. Petru Groza comes up, being in discrete contact with Ion Antonescu: *If the Germans win the war, you will continue to rule. If the Anglo-Saxons are the vanquishers, Maniu will be the man of the day. But if, the way I fear it will be, the Russians are the defeaters, it will be my turn. ...* A complicated business to which the Marshall had to cut the gordian knot by finding, in a currently favourable situation on the front, a solution as lucrative as possible. Certainly, the others supported him, but, several of them, except Iuliu Maniu and not only, left him in solitude at the “National High Treason Trial”. The Bolshevik fate of the country was about to assert itself but, nevertheless, it offered them (except Petru Groza, in the group of communist vanquishers), only a little later, a bill not pathetic, but dramatic, tormenting, lethal. The fate, in fact, of small countries on the chess table of the great powers...

In fact, during the first decade of December 1941, in his answer to the English ultimatum, and a result of the notice given by the American Government representing the interests of Great Britain in Bucharest, Ion Antonescu would firmly show – as said by Gheorghe Barbul – that the war Romania went into, by the side of Germany, was only meant against Russia which rapted territories, despite the fact that Germany and Italy requested, in virtue of article 2 from the Tripartite Pactum, that Romania would declare war against The United States, next to England which we were already at war with. Ion Antonescu would say, drawing the attention of the media with his manner of approaching the issue: *I am the Reich ally against Russia. Nevertheless, I am neuter between England and Germany. I stand for the Americans against the Japanese. Is that clear?* The media, the people understood this, but less was it understood by Great Britain and the United States who stubbornly started to bomb us starting with 1943, creating great destruction, many deaths and a lot of injured. This happened while Romania, among other things, had put under its protection, without handing over to Germany, which was insistently asking it, the American and English pilots in the planes shot down by the anti-Aerian devices and fallen down on the Romanian territory. And they continued to be. Gh. Barbul largely extends on this.

5. The volume of the diplomat and high Romanian State official offers not few premises for the understanding of relationships between Ion (sometimes Mihai, too) Antonescu and the legionaries; between Antonescu and Ribbentrop; between Antonescu, King Mihai and Mother Queen; between Ion Antonescu and Mihai Antonescu, given the conditions of his conspiracy but who, in fact, was also the Marshall's who pursued, as said before, that Romania went out of the war but under better conditions. Gh. Barbul did not impose opinions on us, but rather he urged to reflection. At the same time, it is shown to us the way he examined the situation of the Jews, in truth, a hesitating examination, although a wider analysis of it was required, much more the fact that the Jewish population was confronted with harsh anti-Semitic politics and measures taken by the government, in the army, where happened a lot of killings.

We left for the end the analysis that Gh. Barbul makes to some economic problems. Which were, in the author's view, the few coordinates of the relationships, at war, between Romania and Germany? On the one hand, Barbul says, *Romania, a Third Reich Satellite, could always negotiate, without impediments from the German people, with any (well, "any" is relative, we note) other partner.* Obviously not petrol. *It could send food products that were lacking in Germany to Greece and France without von Killinger considering it right to interfere. Despite increasing tensions between Berlin and Ankara, our goods headed towards Istanbul, according to freely consented agreements between the two countries...* And Barbul continued: *The Romanian democrats, in order for their voices not to be suppressed by the others' complaints, state everywhere that our country had been systematically robbed by the Germans... The reality is totally different.* "If the Reich and Romania were two trading houses that are decisively determined to close accounts, Romania is the one which would be in debt to Germany", said Clodius, Ribbentrop's specialist for economic businesses. And it was true. Every time when the German debt exceeded the possibilities of our Treasury, the clearing was covered with golden cessions and foreign exchanges made by Reichbank to the profit of the Romanian National Bank. *Five trainloads of German gold and one hundred forty-seven million Swiss Francs entered into the Romanian State patrimony. Besides these, the Reich granted its satellite a*

loan of two hundred million Reichsmark for Romania's military and industrial equipment. It was integrally used, but Antonescu had obtained from Hitler that Romania would never return it. In the case of a common victory, this amount had to be retained from the war indemnification that Romania was entitled to ask from its enemies... And he continued: *In Bucharest, the most remarkable business people on the old continent bunched together, making important business. The business turnover was highly increasing everywhere...* Should we believe Barbul? These are figures and words in general, not covered in the book by general and financial series of statistical data needed. We should, however, keep in mind the fact that, at the end of our alliance with the Germans, the gold stock of the Romanian National Bank was greater than at the beginning, when the war started. And let us compare it with the SovRom tragedy, for us. Barbul has one more argument: *For two years of Russian occupation, Romania had performed services to the Soviet Union in value of more than a million dollars. Had the country been economically ruined by the Reich, it certainly couldn't have made such an effort.* A thing to reflect on...

6. Ever since the summer of 1943, Marshall Ion Antonescu began to think that Germany had lost the war, according to Gh. Barbul. That very year and afterwards *the circle rounds around our country. Occupying Hungary, the Germans would stop the means of access to the West. In the South, in Bulgaria, they controlled the people trafficking to Turkey. Running to the North or the East was impossible. One would meet with the front and the Russians. The Romanian democrats were crazily struggling like game attacked by hunters. Maniu's and his partisans' freedom would cost the Marshall many tones of petrol.* In one of Hitler's journeys, Mihai Antonescu joined "The Führer" hoping that, in his presence, Hitler would not dare to declare him responsible for the "disloyal" Romanian politics. ... Lists were drawn in a hurry, containing names of people the Germans were going to arrest as the result of a government instalment in Bucharest, according to the model of the Budapest one ... It seemed, however, little probable, that Hitler would try to overthrow Antonescu regime in times when the Southern part of the Eastern front depended, to a great extent, on the Romanian army. Depriving the country of its legitimate regime, in order to install, by force, an administration completely devoted to the Germans happened in Budapest,

1000 km ahead of the front. However, in Bucharest, such a stab, without the participation of the State and Army bodies, would have born inestimable risks. The Marshall had kept, therefore, next to Germany, an attitude strong enough to face Hitler... Legionary pressures were not very successful, and Ion Antonescu, with some of his attitudes towards the Führer, sometimes clearly opposing Hitler, would continue his destiny as an ally up to the end. With the known dramatic outcome... It is, certainly, a point of view, but it is worth reflecting on it.

There is more to it. August 23, 1944, an event which Gh. Barbul describes a little more different than the most commonly accepted versions – *peace without staining my honour* – Ion Antonescu used to say, as he wrote, but the Marshall's soldier honour couldn't have been placed first, when tens of thousands of military lives were at stake to be in great danger as well as the destruction of Romania – he rather massively hurried the German withdrawal. In this last sense, Wehrmacht had to face a real mess. *Except a small number of officers who could save themselves by air*, Gh. Barbul writes, *the 22 divisions found in Romania had been captured by the Russians. The Red Army had made around 316,000 prisoners out of which 197,000 were Germans and 119,000 were Romanians.* Based on "August 23", we add, they were obtained without a fight, the Armistice with the Russians and the allies being concluded only on September 12, 1944. *Wehrmacht's losses, as the Romanian analyst jots down, numerically exceed the ones that the German army had suffered in Stalingrad and Normandy...* And from a strategical point of view, Romania's capitulation had as a consequence a real catastrophe... Among others, we got, in exchange, with the allies' blessing, a large opening towards the Soviets in the road through which they occupied ("liberated") the greatest part of Eastern Europe and made it Bolshevik.

Yet, still points of view of the same author, we come close to the "end of the end". *The immense State body (the Reich's, we note) used to work like a pilot who, until his plane crashes, executes balancing control manœuvres, not allowing itself to be inevitably influenced by destiny. The great body functioned and its servants were meek in making it continue to the end... The masses considered that the war was lost. Trust in the Führer was completely lost but no one (is that really so? Our note) had thought that in the Reich's special situation (after the attack) someone else could have done things better... In the Führer's speeches, the new leitmotif was the following: if we are defeated, this will be the end of the German State.* Not everyone was a fanatic, but they were not few as

well. Hitler would, however, become the symbol of existence, for, as long as he was ruling over the Reich, there would exist a German State... The truth was that Hitler was still, at that date, less loathed than the ones trumpeting resistance, today, against his regime. For the German people (not quite entirely, *we note*), these were only wishing to accelerate the catastrophe... The imperialist army in 1940 had turned to a national defence army. The party was defeated... but OKW “partisans” were not capable of understanding the change that had occurred... The people had shown solidarity towards their Führer during success. Hitler proved himself incapable to show solidarity to his people when “defeated”. Beyond some exaggerations, perhaps, the suggested aspects reveal themselves more than interesting.

According to Barbul, a visible metamorphosis occurred in Hitler as well. *With his eyes clogged in the head, with a pale face, being of an ascetic feebleness, Hitler’s face had taken a new expression. He was again in his feet to face the disaster, but he was no longer Chancellor Adolf Hitler who would boast in the face of Antonescu, towards the end of 1940, that he had submitted the revolutionary clan of his partisans to the technicians’ competence. Adolf Hitler, the obscure agitator of year 1921... The potential enemy had to be detected and suppressed without hesitation...* It was blind fanaticism that would lead, not only Hitler but the entire Germany – in other times, the cradle of world civilization –, to the abyss. From many perspectives, I believe the analyses of Gheorghe Barbul are correct enough. “Madness” and political stubbornness, the stepping on corpses are proven by history to be wrong and would not lead to anything good.

The volume written by Gheorghe Barbul, a Diplomat in Economic Politics, graduate of University “Regele Ferdinand I” in Cluj, is a book of memories, written behind closed doors. Even if we have different opinions regarding the content, it is not bad at all that we have such a book. Gh. Barbul left the country, with a passport, as mentioned, in August 1947.

He was among the last able to leave. And where did he go? To Paris, France, “the City of Liberty”. Not even Berlin was so – it couldn’t at the time, -, not even Moscow, or London, or New York etc. So, it was Paris... But even Paris, during those days, before and after 1950, when the book in discussion was published in the mentioned French Publishing House, and all France, in

fact, was seized with a feverish struggle against former “collaborators”, in parallel with a wide action to purge them: harsh investigations, tough judging, heavy sentences, not few death condemnations.

Gh. Barbul, even if a Romanian, through the positions occupied in the country, was not included in that category. He did not decide, he was a State official. Nevertheless, had he remained in Romania, he would have gone to prison for at least twenty years, I believe.

"Comme ça tourne le monde", would the French say...