

ARCHITECT ALEXANDRU ZAMFIROPOL IN
THE *SECURITATE* FILES.
CAUSE AND EFFECTS OF A MEMORANDUM
SUBMITTED IN THE 1950'S.

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Abstract: During our research called “The Romanian architects and political detention”, we have so far identified over 200 cases of professionals of this guild who were politically imprisoned between 1944 and 1964. Apart from a multitude of elements, an engaging fact was the acknowledgment and identification of the criminal classifications in all these cases, from membership in outlawed organizations, military resistance, former dignitaries, to attempts of fraudulent border crossing and the classical conspiracy against social order. But there were cases where the architects objected and tried to maintain a form of independence, albeit at a very high price.

One of them was Alexandru Zamfiropol, a professional whom we have almost forgotten about nowadays. He was not convicted or thrown in jail for years, but an inflammatory report sent to a design institute in the early 50's made the *Securitate* arrest and investigate him. After his release, he was “killed” from a professional perspective, brushed aside and almost forgotten. This text recounts how the architect interacted with the repressive authorities, mainly in the context of the archives of the former *Securitate*. At the same time, we express our hope that this disclosure will motivate the researchers to focus more on that period of time and thus accomplish what we are missing the most – monographies of the professionals forced into the shadows by the repressive mechanisms of the 50's and 60's. It is certain that such endeavour will place architect Alexandru Zamfiropol in his well-deserved standing in the history of our profession.

Rezumat: În cadrul cercetării noastre intitulate *Arhitecții români și detenția politică* am identificat până în prezent peste 200 de cazuri de profesioniști ai breslei care au fost întemnițați politic în intervalul 1944-1964. Alături de o mulțime de alte elemente, foarte interesantă a fost constatarea și identificarea încadrărilor penale în toate aceste cazuri, de la apartenență la organizații interzise, rezistență armată, foști demnitari, până la tentativă de trecere frauduloasă a frontierei și clasică uneltire contra ordinii sociale. Dar au existat și cazuri în care arhitecții au protestat și au încercat să-și păstreze o formă de independență, plătind scump pentru aceasta.

Unul dintre aceștia a fost și Alexandru Zamfiropol, un profesionist aproape uitat astăzi. Nu a fost condamnat și nu a înfundat pușcări pentru cine știe câți ani, dar un memoriu incendiar înaintat conducerii unui institut de proiectare la începutul anilor '50 a determinat Securitatea să-l aresteze și să-l ancheteze. Pus în libertate, a fost „omorât” din punct de vedere profesional, marginalizat și – cum spuneam – astăzi uitat. Textul nostru prezintă pe scurt interacțiunea arhitectului

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cu organele repressive, din perspectiva documentelor din arhiva fostei Securități. În același timp, ne exprimăm speranța că și această încercare de ridicare a cortinei va inspira cercetătorii în a se apleca mai consistent asupra perioadei în cauză, realizând ceea ce ne lipsește poate cel mai mult – monografiile ale profesioniștilor aruncați în penumbră de mecanismele repressive ale anilor 1950-1960. Cu siguranță un astfel de demers îl va așeza la locul cuvenit în istoria breslei noastre și pe cel care a fost arhitectul Alexandru Zamfiropol.

Our research on *Romanian architects and political detention* has dealt with the documentation of over 200 cases of professionals incarcerated during the Communist regime in Romania.¹ With no further details, we would not be far in our guess to double the number by adding the people who went through forced relocation, marginalization and other forms of repression. In other words, the total number of victims of the former regime sums up to about 500, half of the total number of members in the Union of Architects of the Popular Republic of Romania (there were slightly over 1000 registered at the end of the 50's).² The percentage of people brutally pushed away for a while or for good is significant, even though it can be assumed that not all architects were registered with the Union.

Should the initial hypothesis is fully confirmed – it was neither their works that they used as tools to oppose the regime with, nor did they try to remain independent from the authorities to a certain extent – the findings of our research studies have helped deal with a wide range of aspects, such as the completion of information on several praised architects whose works are recognized but whose repressive episodes are missing from their biographies.

Below, we will introduce the intricate yet interesting relation between the Communist regime and architect Alexandru Zamfiropol, exclusively relying on documents in the archives of the former *Securitate*.

Born in Ploiești on 30 October 1898, he graduated primary school at *Sf. Voievozi* in Bucharest and attended classes at *Matei Basarab* high school. A military school student, he enlisted as volunteer during WWI and worked as courier, being badly injured in his leg during the Ciurea battle in January 1917, having to spend the

¹ Along with other texts and scientific papers, we were able to publish two volumes so far, see Vlad Mitric-Ciupe, “Arhitecții români și detenția politică 1944-1964. Între destin concentraționar și vocație profesională”/”The Romanian architects and political detention 1944-1964. Between prison fate and professional vocation”, I.N.S.T., Bucharest, 2013 (a volume of 75 short biographies) and Vlad Mitric-Ciupe, “Arhitecți în reclusiune. Interviu și documente”/”Architects in reclusion. Interviews and documents”, Vremea Publishing House, Bucharest, 2016.

² See Panaitescu 2016.