

LEGIUNEA DE JANDARMI ODORHEI ÎN PERIOADA 1944-1945

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THE ODORHEI GENDARMERIE LEGION DURING THE PERIOD 1944-1945

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LA LÉGION DE GENDARMERIE D'ODORHEI PENDANT LA PÉRIODE 1944-1945

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Rezumat: În septembrie 1944, Legiunea de Jandarmi Odorhei se afla în subordinea Inspectoratului de Jandarmi Mureș, aflat atunci sub comanda colonelului Virgil Ariton. Legiunea de Jandarmi Odorhei era condusă de maiorul Bogdan Ioan și avea în subordine cinci secții de jandarmi, care, la rândul lor, coordonau activitatea posturilor de jandarmi. Documentele de arhivă arată că, deși în lunile septembrie și octombrie 1944, pe teritoriul Inspectoratului de Jandarmi Mureș se desfășurau încă lupte cu trupele maghiaro-germane, iar orașul Târgu Mureș, reședința județului se afla sub bombardamentul artileriei inamice, colonelul Virgil Ariton a sprijinit acțiunile militare. În decembrie 1944, odată cu desființarea Inspectoratului de Jandarmi Mureș, Legiunea de Jandarmi Odorhei, împreună cu întreg efectivul și suportul logistic, a fost transferată la Inspectoratul Sibiu. Jandarmii au desfășurat o activitate intensă pentru curățarea terenului de soldații germani și maghiari ascunși în pădurile județului. Menționăm că, în această perioadă, cadrele legiunii au avut activitate pe linie informativ-operativă, tocmai pentru a putea menține un climat de ordine și liniște publică.

Cuvinte-cheie: jandarm, evacuare, lupte, bombardament

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Abstract: In september 1944, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion was under the authority of the Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate, which was then commanded by Colonel Virgil Ariton. The Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion was led by Major Bogdan Ioan and had five gendarmerie sections under its command, which in turn coordinated the activity of the local gendarmerie posts. Archival documents show that although in September and October 1944 battles were still taking place within the territory of the Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate against Hungarian-German troops and the city of Târgu Mureș, the county seat, was under enemy artillery bombardment, Colonel Virgil Ariton supported the military actions. In December 1944, with the disbandment of the Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion, along with all personnel and logistical support, was transferred to the

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Sibiu Inspectorate. The gendarmes carried out intensive operations to clear the area of German and Hungarian soldiers hiding in the county's forests. It is worth mentioning that during this period, the legion's personnel conducted intelligence and operational activities precisely in order to maintain an atmosphere of public order and peace.

Keywords: *gendarme, evacuation, battles, bombardment*

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Résumé: *En septembre 1944, la Légion de Gendarmerie d'Odorhei était placée sous l'autorité de l'Inspection de Gendarmerie de Mureș, alors commandée par le colonel Virgil Ariton. La Légion de Gendarmerie d'Odorhei était dirigée par le major Bogdan Ioan et comptait cinq sections de gendarmerie sous sa subordination, lesquelles coordonnaient à leur tour l'activité des postes de gendarmerie. Les documents d'archives attestent que, bien qu'au cours des mois de septembre et octobre 1944 des combats étaient encore en cours sur le territoire relevant de l'Inspection de Gendarmerie de Mureș contre les troupes hongroises et allemandes, et que la ville de Târgu Mureș, chef-lieu du département, se trouvait sous le bombardement de l'artillerie ennemie, le colonel Virgil Ariton a apporté son appui aux opérations militaires. En décembre 1944, à la suite de la dissolution de l'Inspection de Gendarmerie de Mureș, la Légion de Gendarmerie d'Odorhei, avec l'ensemble de son effectif et son soutien logistique, a été transférée à l'Inspection de Sibiu. Les gendarmes ont mené des actions intensives en vue de nettoyer le territoire des soldats allemands et hongrois dissimulés dans les forêts du département. Il est à noter que, durant cette période, les cadres de la légion ont exercé une activité à caractère informatif et opérationnel, précisément afin d'assurer le maintien de l'ordre et de la tranquillité publique.*

Mots clés: *gendarme, évacuation, combats, bombardement*

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On september 17, 1944, in the context of the reoccupation of Northern Transylvania by the romanian-soviet troops, new orders were issued regarding the reestablishment of the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion, with its headquarters set in the city of Odorhei. This initiative took place during a period of military and administrative transition, immediately after the Armistice of august 23, 1944, when Romania switched sides and joined the United Nations. To ensure the rapid operationalization of the Legion, the assembly point for the personnel was established in the city of Sighișoara, Târnava Mare County. The unit's command was entrusted to major Bogdan Ioan, with second Lieutenant Dumitrescu Gheorghe as his deputy. The center consisted of 2 officers, 110 non-commissioned officers and 151 soldiers.

Following the mobilization and reorganization of personnel, the unit was deployed in Odorhei County, where the posts, sections and organizational framework of the legion were reactivated, in accordance with the previous structure from 1940. The territorial structure of the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion included five operational sections, each with several subordinate gendarmerie posts, as follows:

The Gendarmerie Section of Beclean coordinated the posts in the localities of Beclean, Lupeni, Satu Mare, Sâncraiu – Vârșag – Vlăhița and Zetea;

The Gendarmerie Section of I.G. Duca supervised the activity of the posts in Avrămești, Cobătești, Eliseni, I.G. Duca, Săcueni and Șimonești;

The Gendarmerie Section of Mugeni included the posts in Dârju, Feliceni, Mugeni and Porumbeni Mari;

The Gendarmerie Section of Ocland managed the posts in Brăduț, Biborțeni, Lueta, Mărtănuș, Ocland and Sânpaul;

The Gendarmerie Section of Sângeorgiu had under its command the posts in Bezid, Atid, Corund, Ghindăni, Praid, Jacodul and Sângeorgiu.

On september 20, 1944, the entire personnel of the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion had been deployed to the assigned posts and had begun their activity in the affected territory. The Legion was subordinated to the Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate, headquartered in the city of Târgu Mureș, with colonel Virgil Ariton in command of this inspectorate³. According to the evaluation report prepared by the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie for the period of november 1944 – october 1945, regarding colonel Virgil Ariton, it is clear that he continued to command the Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate until december 10, 1944, when the inspectorate's activity was suspended. Due to the operational situation, the structure was evacuated from the recently occupied Transylvania and colonel Virgil Ariton was subsequently appointed as a senior control officer, taking charge of the Supply Department and the „Gendarmerie's House” Association.

Furthermore, archival documents reveal that he was described as „a healthy and resilient officer. Full of energy, he is imbued with foresight and initiative. Decisive in all actions, he had great willpower and an exceptional work ethic. A perfect organizer, he is endowed with a broad creative spirit. A man of distinguished character, a very good comrade, he possesses superior professional, legal and military training. Authoritative, he enjoys exceptional prestige within the corps. During his three months in command at the Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate, by using tact and moderation, he succeeded from the first month in restoring order and instilling respect for Romanian authority. (...) Although in september and october 1944, the Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate's territory was still witnessing battles with hungarian - german troops and Târgu Mureș, the headquarters city, was under enemy artillery bombardment, colonel Ariton remained steadfast at his post, supported the military action and directed the operations for the pursuit and capture of scattered enemy elements, achieving very good results”⁴.

On october 31, 1944, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion carried out intense operations, with the primary objective of clearing the area of german and hungarian soldiers who were left isolated and hiding in the forests of the county. As a result of these actions, public order was restored and the civilian population once again

³ Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (ANIC), fond *Inspectoratele Regionale de Jandarmi*, dosar nr. 367, f. 33v.

⁴ Depozitul Central de Arhivă Pitești, fond *CM Oraș București*, dosar nr. 8/1916, f. 57.

benefited from a climate of safety and stability. In november 1944, more specifically starting from november 15, the personnel of the Legion were ordered to leave the territory of Odorhei County, with the commune of Feldioara, Braşov County, established as the concentration and relocation point. After receiving the order, the evacuation of civilian officials was carried out first, followed by the gradual evacuation of the entire Legion. Although there were difficulties during the evacuation process, it was completed without human casualties, animal losses, or damage to materials and the personnel settled in the commune of Feldioara, resuming their specific activities within the service.

On December 4, 1944, the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie informed the territorial units that the gendarmerie formations withdrawn from Northern Transylvania had settled, in accordance with order M.St.M. no. 71.202 of November 13, 1944, temporarily, until their reinstatement in the respective territories. Thus, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion was established in Feldioara, Braşov County⁵. Also, on the same date, the Sibiu Gendarmerie Inspectorate was renamed the Braşov Gendarmerie Inspectorate. On this occasion, the Interior Zone Police Companies No. 206 and 208 were established. Then, on december 16, 1944, according to Order IGJ no. 1756/1944, the personnel of the inspectorate was reduced according to the table below:

Situation regarding the reduction of the Braşov Gendarmerie Inspectorate personnel on December 16, 1944

<i>Formation</i>	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Non-commissioned officers</i>	<i>Soldiers</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Headquarters of the Braşov Inspectorate</i>	12	33	49	94
<i>Sibiu Gendarmerie Legion</i>	3	123	116	242
<i>Târnavă Mare Gendarmerie Legion</i>	3	111	142	256
<i>Făgăraş Gendarmerie Legion</i>	3	99	114	216
<i>Braşov Gendarmerie Legion</i>	3	148	150	301
<i>Trei Scaune Gendarmerie Legion</i>	4	126	107	237
<i>Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion</i>	4	106	94	204
<i>Ciuc Gendarmerie Legion</i>	4	105	95	204
<i>Total</i>	36	851	867	1754

Sursa: ANIC, fond Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei, dosar 16/1933, f. 171v.

In December 1944, following the dissolution of the Mureş Gendarmerie Inspectorate, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion, along with its entire personnel and the necessary logistical support, was transferred under the command of the Sibiu Gendarmerie Inspectorate. The command of this inspectorate was held by colonel

⁵ ANIC, fond *Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei*, dosar nr 2/1944, f. 142.

Popa Augustin. Part of the Odorhei Legion's personnel was stationed in the commune of Feldioara⁶, while the other part was assigned to the border posts in Târnava Mare County, as follows: Augustin, Bodogaia, Dârjiu, Eliseni, Săcueni, Mugeni, Moșna, Mercheașa and Petecu⁷.

In January 1945, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion, with a personnel of 2 officers, 106 non-commissioned officers and 94 soldiers, was still operational in the commune of Feldioara, Brașov County, continuing to oversee the 10 border posts in Târnava Mare County. During this period, major Bogatu Ioan was transferred from the command of the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion to the command of the Caraș Legion and the position of commander was taken over by second lieutenant Dumitrescu Gheorghe. On February 20, 1945, the personnel of the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion moved to the area of the Cernato Section of the Brașov Legion to track down and capture the German soldiers who were clandestinely present in the region. On this occasion, 20 men and 3 women of German nationality were captured and handed over to the Legion. For the guard at the Brașov Legion, 7 non-commissioned officers remained, while another 7 non-commissioned officers were assigned to the Hălchiu - Brașov Camp⁸.

According to the order of the Sibiu Gendarmerie Inspectorate, 42 gendarmes from the Făgăraș Gendarmerie Legion were deployed to form a new police company. In accordance with the orders, 24 gendarmes were left at the headquarters of this inspectorate, while 15 corporal students were transferred to the Battalion of the Ploiești Oil Region Regiment. As a result, the Legion remained with a personnel of 2 officers, 107 non-commissioned officers and 10 gendarmes on duty, of which 5 corporal students and 5 soldiers were detached from the Brașov Gendarmerie Legion. The General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, through the Staff – Mobilization Bureau, issued Order no. 1870 on March 1, 1945, establishing a personnel of 126 active members for the legion, including 6 officers, 110 non-commissioned officers and 10 soldiers. In the same context, a reorganization of the Legion was ordered according to the new administrative structure, reducing the number of posts by half. As a result of these directives, a new reorganization was carried out, as follows:

The headquarters of the Gendarmerie Legion, located in the town of Odorhei, currently in Feldioara, Brașov County.

The Gendarmerie Section of Beclean included the posts in Dârjiu, Mugeni, Feliceni, Beclean, Lupeni, Zetea and Vlăhița.

The Gendarmerie Section of I.G. Duca encompassed the posts in Avrămești, I.G. Duca and Cobățești.

The Gendarmerie Section of Praid included the posts in Praid, Corund and Cușmed.

⁶ Sandru, Dumitru, *Administrația din Nord-Vestul Transilvaniei de după 23 august 1944*, în *Angvstia*, 10, 2006, Istorie Sociologie, Editura Angvstia, Sfântu Gheorghe, 2006, p. 177.

⁷ ANIC, fond *Inspectoratele Regionale de Jandarmi*, dosar nr. 367, f. 34.

⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 35.

The Gendarmerie Section of Sângeorgiu comprised the posts in Sângeorgiu, Ghindari⁹.

On March 20, 1945, two gendarmerie sectors were established, namely Odorhei and I.G. Duca. On March 27, 1945, the gendarmes of the Legion were informed that german paratroopers had been dropped on the common land of Crislov. Following this, under the command of captain M. Alexandru, the gendarmes urgently proceeded to the location and upon arrival, they discovered five crates containing romanian currency, medicines, civilian clothes, pistols, ammunition, radio receivers and transmitters, as well as five parachutes. All the items found, including the sum of 72,800,000 lei, were seized by the gendarmes¹⁰. On March 31, 1945, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion had a personnel composed of 2 officers, 106 non-commissioned officers and 94 soldiers. During this quarter, the legion was stationed in Feldioara, Braşov County. In light of the risks following the withdrawal of the german troops from the area, by the end of march, the entire personnel was involved in raids across Braşov County, aiming to identify and capture german paratroopers who had remained concealed in the region. On may 22, 1945, the Odorhei Legion underwent an official inspection conducted by general Anton, who traveled to Feldioara. Subsequently, on july 2, 1945, the Legion returned to its traditional garrison, being reinstated in the town of Odorhei, at the unit's former headquarters.

On april 7, 1945, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion was inspected by colonel Bădescu Gheorghe from the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, who issued a series of guidelines and directives regarding the behavior of the gendarmes when operating in the ceded territory, given the Legion's transfer to that area. On april 9, 1945, according to the telephone order from the Braşov Gendarmerie Legion, a number of 20 non-commissioned officers and 6 soldiers, under the command of plt. sgt. Stănică Florea, were dispatched at the disposal of the Braşov Legion and the soviet authorities to the commune of Tohanu Vechi for a special mission. On April 11, 1945, following the order of the Sibiu Gendarmerie Inspector, second lieutenant Gh. Dumitrescu went to the front as part of the 19th Police Company. During the same period, major Stănescu, the commander of the Legion, was detached to an Operational Battalion of the Bucharest Infantry Regiment and captain Vlădescu Vasile, from the Braşov Legion, was temporarily appointed as the commander of the Legion. On april 25, 1945, there was a reduction in the personnel of the Gendarmerie Legion, so, following IGJ Order no. 1020/1945, the personnel was reduced to 3 officers, 58 non-commissioned officers and 20 gendarmes. Considering that not all formations could be accommodated, an additional 3 posts were eliminated and the Legion was reorganized as follows:

Odorhei Sector: Beclean Section (posts in Beclean, Mugeni, Vlăhiţa, Zetea) and Ocland Section (posts in Ocland and Vârghiş);

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 35-36.

I.G. Duca Sector: I.G. Duca Section (posts in I.G. Duca, Cobătești), Sângeorgiu Section (post in Sângeorgiu) and Praid Section (post in Praid)¹¹.

At the end of may 1945, the Gendarmerie Legion of Odorhei, temporarily deployed in the commune of Feldioara, Brașov County, underwent an inspection by Brigadier General Anton, the General Inspector of the Gendarmerie. In July 1945, the Odorhei Legion was relocated from the commune of Feldioara to the town of Odorhei, re-establishing itself in the old garrison. During this period, new gendarmerie posts were established in various localities, including Lupeni, Avrămești, Ulieș, etc. On July 12, 1945, by the Order of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie no. 1070/1945, the personnel of the Odorhei Legion was established as follows: 5 officers, 58 non-commissioned officers, 15 conscripted soldiers, 6 recalled soldiers and 45 gendarmes from the former hungarian gendarmerie, integrated into the operational structure of the unit¹².

According to information obtained by the gendarmes of the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion, in July 1945, in the informational report prepared by captain Marcu Marian, the commander of the legion, the mood in the county, particularly in its southwestern part, was detailed. In rural areas, a few romanian families were present and in the southern part of the county, the rest of the romanian urban population consisted of a small number of civil servants assigned to various state institutions. The report emphasizes that, in general, the mood was satisfactory, largely calm, especially after the installation of romanian authorities and, specifically, after the Romanian Gendarmerie's assumption of authority in the regions of Northern Transylvania.

Additionally, the report mentions a problem regarding the lack of cash, a situation caused by propaganda suggesting the continuation of the Hungarian administration, which led to a partial currency change, with the population holding on to some of the old money, hoping for the return of the former administration. Additionally, the lack of basic materials was a problem and in the county, there was widespread speculation with essential goods, a phenomenon occurring on a large scale. These actions were reported to the competent authorities, including the Prefecture and the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Odorhei Court. From a demographic perspective, the population of the county was largely composed of approximately 98% Hungarians, with the remainder being Romanians, Saxons and Szeklers. Within the coverage area of the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion, there were only a few industrial units, including the Vlăhița Iron Works and the Praid Salt Mines. Their workers were organized into trade unions and generally, they were satisfied with the wages they received¹³.

At the beginning of August 1945, tables were drawn up listing the commands, units and non-operational formations that participated in military actions against German troops. These were prepared in accordance with the provisions of the General

¹¹ *Ibidem*, f. 36v

¹² *Ibidem*, ff. 37-38v.

¹³ Arhiva Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității, fond *Documentar*, dosar nr. 013663, vol. 1, ff. 353-354.

Staff Order no. 685.300/1945, which shows that, in the Transylvanian area, the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion participated in operations between August 23 and November 15, 1944¹⁴. On August 23, 1945, by Order IGJ no. 1080/1945, it was decided to disband the gendarmerie sections and establish gendarmerie sectors in the headquarters of each district, with each sector staffed 80% with officers and 20% with non-commissioned officers. As a result of this reorganization, five operational sectors were created as follows: the Odorhei Gendarmerie Sector, the I.G. Duca Sector, the Sângeorgiu Sector, the Praid Sector and the Ocland Sector¹⁵. In order to support the actions of the „Tudor Vladimirescu” Division in Debrecen, on September 15, 1945, 15 sergeants major and 30 sergeants from the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion were detached to reinforce the operational structures of the division.

On August 23, 1944, at a pivotal moment in Romania's history, the organizational structure of the Romanian Gendarmerie was well-defined and functional. The General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie had the Sub-Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie in Cluj, with its command center established in the Cluj garrison. This sub-inspectorate coordinated, both operationally and administratively, three major territorial units: the Gendarmerie Inspectorates of Sibiu, Târgu Mureș and Cluj. Additionally, the Gendarmerie Legion of Odorhei was under the direct command of the Inspectorate, alongside other important legions in the central part of the country: Mureș, Târnava Mică, Ciuc and Trei Scaune¹⁶.

On August 26, 1945, in accordance with the provisions of the Allied Control Commission, the legion's personnel was modified, reaching 5 officers, 127 non-commissioned officers and 16 soldiers. To reinforce the personnel, on September 15, 1945, the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie ordered the dispatch of 15 sergeants major and 30 sergeants from the „Tudor Vladimirescu” Division¹⁷.

In the context of consolidating the authority of the Romanian state immediately following the end of World War II, the Romanian Gendarmerie underwent an extensive territorial reorganization. On December 15, 1945, under the order of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie nr. 101581/1945, the re-establishment of the Târgu Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate was ordered, consisting of the Mureș Gendarmerie Legion and the Târnava Mica Legion, both transferred from the subordination of the Cluj Gendarmerie Inspectorate¹⁸. Additionally, three other legions, Trei Scaune, Ciuc and Odorhei, were transferred from the Sibiu Gendarmerie Inspectorate to the Târgu Mureș Gendarmerie Inspectorate¹⁹. To complete the personnel, under order IGJ nr. 289931/1945, 174 non-commissioned officers and soldiers from the "Tudor Vladimirescu" Division were assigned to the subordination of

¹⁴ ANIC, fond *Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei*, dosar nr. 143/1945, f. 2.

¹⁵ *Idem*, fond *Inspectoratele Regionale de Jandarmi*, dosar nr. 367, f. 38.

¹⁶ *Idem*, fond *Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei*, dosar 16/1933, f. 170v.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 194.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 193.

¹⁹ Țurlea, Petre, *Români și unguri 1945-2018*, vol. III, Editura Karta-Graphics, Ploiești, 2018, p. 7.

the Târgu Mureș Inspectorate. Subsequently, on september 24, 1945, according to IGJ order nr. 72571/1945, captain Mureșeanu Gheorghe and lieutenant Topolniceanu Gheorghe, both from the same division, were assigned to the Education and Culture Department of the Inspectorate. Along with them, three non-commissioned officers were also appointed. The process of supplementing personnel continued and on October 6, 1945, under IGJ order nr. 230338/1945, a group of 54 non-commissioned officers and soldiers was transferred from the „Horia, Cloșca and Crișan” Division²⁰. The activity carried out by the personnel of the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion during the turbulent years of 1944–1945 did not go unrecognized by the military authorities. As a result, 32 "Victory" medals were awarded²¹ and in the letter from the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, no. 13,296 dated April 6, 1947, addressed to the Ministry of War, reference is made to the decoration proposals submitted earlier. According to this correspondence, captain Marcu Marian from the Odorhei Gendarmerie Legion was proposed for decoration based on General Order no. 29 from June 3, 1946, as well as Order no. 49,340 from the same year, with the "For Victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945" medal, awarded as a token of appreciation for his contribution to the war effort²².

The re-establishment of this gendarmerie unit was important for restoring order and control in the Odorhei area, contributing to the strengthening of the Romanian state's institutions in the recently regained territories. The Romanian Gendarmerie operated in accordance with the evolution of the political and military situation at the end of the Second World War. Through this reorganization, the authorities aimed to ensure the Gendarmerie's presence in Transylvania, in order to maintain order, security and the smooth functioning of institutions in these territories. The activity of the Odorhei Legion shows how the Romanian Gendarmerie sought to rebuild its forces and contribute to stabilizing a sensitive region during a time of major internal changes and transitions.

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²⁰ ANIC, fond *Inspectoratul General al Jandarmeriei*, dosar 16/1933, f. 193.

²¹ *Ibidem*, dosar nr. 18/1946, f. 60.

²² *Ibidem*, dosar nr. 12/1946, ff. 41-42.