

Condemnation of the Communism or Reconciliation?
A Teleological Analysis of the Presidential Commission for the Study of the
Communist Dictatorship in Romania
(Abstract)

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The aim of this study is to present and analyses the work done by the Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania. Its focus falls on the need to find ways of better understanding the process of national reconciliation that can be identified at the intersection between the area of transitional justice and the space of historical narrative. One of the functions of truth commissions is to reconcile a nation or a society with itself as they face the legacy of a traumatic past.

The study identifies several causes that led to the establishment of Romanian Commission, but, in particular, considers those points related to the purpose of the decision to have such a commission in Romania. In this context, it underlines the fact that the purpose of national reconciliation was intimately linked (by the Romanian President Traian Băsescu, the high profile public figure who launched the debate in the Romanian Parliament in 2006) to the need for official condemnation of the Communism.

From a methodological perspective, the study is concerned with applying a theoretical framework to assess the effectiveness of the reconciliation debate that took place in Romania between April and December 2006. The method consists of a combination of historiographical analysis of the events and a theoretical interpretation using the conceptual framework specific to transitional justice.

The analysis itself is done in three steps. Firstly, public discourse seeking condemnation of communism was put into balance with the objective functions characteristic of truth commissions. So it highlights the social reconciliation path, which didn't emerge during the public debate of early/late April – December 2006, but which was vaguely assumed by Romanian President at that time. Secondly, in the context of the decision to form the commission of truth, three groups of reasons have been identified. Finally, it was observed that the decision to establish the commission was taken in a period of growing political tension and increased radicalization of public debate; all this in a period of time characterized by relative low levels of political stability and social calm.

Thus, the analysis forms a body of theoretical explanations based on factual evidence that shades new light on the idea that the process of social reconciliation by or *after* the condemnation of communism has not been an effective process for Romania. In other words, using the method of condemning the communism has not led to the much wanted healing of the social scars produced by nearly a half a century of communist ruling.

We conclude that there are huge contrasting positions regarding the anticommunism debate within the current Romanian political and intellectual elite. As a result the social reconciliation has not been yet achieved especially because the debate is stuck due to those insisting that reconciliation can only be reached *after* and *through* the condemnation of communism.