

“The Desert of Spoken Words”: Conversations of Bishop Márton Áron Recorded by the Securitate in 1956-1980

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Abstract:

Márton Áron, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Alba Iulia (1938-1980), came to the attention of the Securitate from the founding of this repressive institution until the autumn of 1980, when he passed away. The reasons for his surveillance were his popularity among the faithful, his outspoken anti-communism, his loyalty to the Vatican and the fact that he came from the country's largest national minority. The results of this extended surveillance are reflected today in the bishop's files in the Archive of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives in Bucharest. One of the main methods used by the Securitate in the surveillance process was the use of microphones. They were installed in the bishop's office in 1956 and operated with short interruptions until the end of his life. The transcripts of the recorded conversations are today in the bishop's files and represent a “gold mine” for historians interested in the Catholic Church in Romania during the Communist regime.

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