

DANA SALA

[dsf\\_dana@yahoo.com](mailto:dsf_dana@yahoo.com)

Associate Professor PhD, University of Oradea

Universitatii Street no 1, Oradea, Romania

Article code 607-223R71



**Staze și metastaze carcerale**

**de Ioana Cistelean**

Editura Charmides, Bistrița, 2019

**(Carceral Stases and Metastases**

**by Ioana Cistelean**

Charmides Publishing House, Bistrița, 2019)

---

## HONESTY VS METACRITICISM

*Abstract: The political prison of the first decades after the brutal installation of communism in Romania did not allow prisoners to write, to detain paper or to communicate their thoughts in any way. In her book published in 2019, entitled Staze și metastaze carcerale (Carceral Stases and Metastases), Ioana Cistelean has given a complex appraisal of the mysterious evasion through words of incarcerated people who had no other resort to dignity. There are five cases selected for analysis from the Romanian Gulag. The poets and authors of memoirs chosen by the author are: Nichifor Crainic, Radu Gyr, Andrei Ciurunga, Ioan Andrei (pen-name of Ioan Ploscaru), Ioan Victor Pica. Poetry was the most spread vehicle of resistance, circulated among prisoners in Morse code, either memorized or preserved as written support in most incredible ways in order to escape the vigilance of the torturers.*

Key words: Romanian Gulag, freedom of speech, carceral poetry, political prison, ideology, democracy, torture, carceral memoirs, totalitarian regime

People who  
experienced a Kafkian  
universe of unjust punishment  
in their own existence,

through fearless opposition to  
the Romanian totalitarianism,  
created a literature with a new  
potential at the cusp of  
journaling and document

restoration. The political prison of the first decades after the brutal installation of communism in Romania did not allow prisoners to write, to detain paper or to communicate their thoughts in any way. In her book published in 2019, entitled *Staze și metastaze carcerale (Carceral Stases and Metastases)*, Ioana Cistelecan has given a complex appraisal of the mysterious evasion through words of incarcerated people who had no other resort to dignity. There are five cases selected for analysis from the Romanian Gulag. The poets and authors of memoirs chosen by the author are: Nichifor Crainic, Radu Gyr, Andrei Ciurunga, Ioan Andrei (pen-name of Ioan Ploscaru), Ioan Victor Pica. They are analysed also in their relationship to the sacred and to their religious creed.

Poetry was the most spread vehicle of resistance, circulated among prisoners in Morse code, either memorized or preserved as written support in most incredible ways in order to escape the vigilance of the torturers<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Ioana Cistelecan, *Staze și metastaze carcerale*, Charmides, 2019, pp.150-151.

Ioana Cistelecan is aware of the maleficent ways of the institutions at that time to destroy the reputation of the victims, to portray them as the allegedly "enemies of the people" and to allow them no means of appealing to justice. Once in prison, the political prisoners were subjected to tortures, to physical and psychical humiliations, to hunger, to deprivation of minimum rights (such as medical assistance, hygiene, freedom of speech). Therefore, Ioana Cistelecan proceeds with great care in identifying first the fight with the ideology of the epoch that the victim (the fighter for democracy) had to undertake.

Her book chooses to watch the war of words in detail and to be part of it. Therefore, the critic takes a deliberate position in granting her book the frame to be a theatre of the war of words. There are two sides fighting: the resistance through words as the only form accepted for the incarcerated poets and writers, on one hand, versus the avalanche of slogans and empty words belonging to propagandistic language of the communist regime, on the other hand. The last chapters show the aftermath of this