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Between Punishment and Reward: Pupils` Families in the Service of Communist Education

ABSTRACT

In modern Romania, the idea of co-opting family in the school's educational effort appeared with the first Organic Law of Education (1864), when elementary studies were decreed mandatory and free. Gradually, this pressure grew bigger under the ministers who insisted the most on the extension of the school impact upon the Romanian society (Spiru Haret, Constantin Angelescu). In the mid-'40s, the communist regime adopted this institutional policy, on which it grafted new means of intervention – coercive ones, in most cases – and a new ideology, directly inspired by the Soviet model. Nevertheless, the relationship between school and family never reached the optimal degree the authorities were looking for. The students' families managed to identify ways to negotiate their collaboration, obtain increased advantages, ignore the school demands or even oppose it, while remaining inside the framework of an authoritarian relational pattern. To identify the characteristic and evolution of this type of relationship between school and the students' families, we intend to investigate autobiographical writings referring to the period in question, as well as the educational literature of those years, confronted with the accessible archive documents – such as accounts of the school meetings with parents or internal reports of school authorities.

KEYWORDS

Romania; Communist Education; School Practices; Students; Coercion.

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A new idea of normality

In the mid-'40s, parents' relation to school was still observing a long practiced pattern, which had successfully survived the war years and the changes it had brought forth. They were only expected to come to school occasionally, at festive moments at the beginning or the end of the school year¹, possibly on the occasion of the major graduation rites of the system (admission examinations, baccalaureate) or the ceremonies expressly dedicated to the public. As for the rest, the duty to be aware of and support the needs of each school lay, by representation, with the local committee, where, every year were elected some respectable parents – as far as possible, well-to-do ones, holding good social positions. They were collaborating with the principal and, possibly, with other important members of the community, invited, them too, to participate in the school committee (the parish priest, the mayor, etc.). The general parents' assembly, which periodically elected the new representative team, was convoked with an advertisement, like any other public meeting at the time². The parents would answer or not the school's appeal, according to their will and possibilities. No further focus was placed on this aspect.

The 1944-1945 academic year started with a big delay, because of the war, of



the sheltering of a big number of schools and of the Soviet troops' presence in the country. Efforts were made however, to return to normal conditions. The teachers resumed their obligations, including that of paying particular attention to the fact that "the pupils' enrolling was made in accordance to the parents' declarations", which had to be verified by soliciting the "civil certificates they [families] have", but also by means of home visits, "about which written reports will be submitted". The teachers' duty was to "collect information about the students' social and material condition", which is to be explained by both the needs of the school bureaucratic machinery and the wish of the new "democratic" power to get a social classification of the inhabitants³. Yet, to get acquainted with the student's private environment seems not to have been a well established and observed rule, as the principal repeated the appeal shortly afterwards: "the teachers [are] notified again to visit students home"⁴.

In the immediately following years, at the start of the new school year, near the parents one could still see the parish priest, charged with blessing the place and the actions⁵. His discourse did not state special news, assuring the community of the perpetuation of its traditional relationships and values. At a modest school in the outskirts of Iasi, the priest was still speaking, in 1947, about the "school life in relation to the Christian education and life, calling the parents' attention upon the obligations they have in regard to the children's breeding, education and cultivation" and asking for everybody's "material and moral support in school seconding"⁶. We should also mention the fact that in this school there was still a numerous Jewish population, for which special courses of Judaic religion and Yiddish had been provided⁷, a fact that did

not impede the mimetic connection to the Romanian traditions, as teacher Lehrer Saul was to take care, for the winter holidays, of the staging of Christmas customs⁸. Nothing announced the radical exclusion of religion from schools, stipulated by the Education reform decree of august 1948.

Usually, the families were indirectly solicited, through the students in the urgent, concrete and punctual solving of some crisis situations, by individual contributions in objects or money⁹. Gradually, the rhythm and colours of school life started changing. Thus, the "Romanian-Soviet friendship week" – a festival held in November 1947, in the same school of Iași – consisted in "conference, Royal Anthem, Soviet Anthem, the *Internationale*, readings from the Soviet peasant's life, recitals and dances". The second day, a "group of *well dressed* pupils [our emphasis, C.M.]" had to go, accompanied by a teacher, "to Circus Copou II, to participate in the unveiling of the 'Soviet Hero' monument". The children were then supposed to go to look after the soviet soldiers' graves, in the cemetery of Socola¹⁰ – soldiers that were added to a long range of older or newer heroes, usually honoured by school.

As one can see, the regime's intrusions into the school life were, for the beginning, mere modifications of content or intensity of some well-known school practices. The prohibition of certain values, behaviours or identities was not quite visible in the beginning, though there were signals in this direction. On 23 February 1948, in the same school, the decision was made that "the students' greetings to the teachers will be 'Bună ziua' ['Good morning'] or 'Bună seara' ['Good afternoon/ Good evening'], and no longer 'Sărut mâna' [Romanian greeting addressed only to women or the elderly, to show respect]"¹¹.

A new education discourse was emerging and within it, the "relationship with



the family” of the student was becoming a priority. Practices that had been previously recommended, but not very much applied, like the teachers’ visits to the students’ places, were more and more frequently invoked by the school authorities. We must remember here the fact that the teaching staff’s social status was, usually, quite different from the one of the students’ families, such “visits” being thus discouraged and only paid in extreme situations. If the student’s condition required it, then the parent was summoned to school and not the other way. A more visible presence inside the community, including by occasional calls, was recommended particularly to the primary school teachers in the countryside, where they had to adopt the role of leaders of the rural life. In the city, where the social upheavals were deeper and more diverse, the didactic “apostolate” was practiced in the urban outskirts and under sensibly diluted forms.

However, in a few years, the former “recommendations” transformed into new job requirements of the teaching staff. The “home visits” became a form of family pressure and surveillance, but also an occasion to make propaganda for the regime, which was thus acquiring new field activists: employees depending on the State and thus at the new power’s disposal.

The teachers were more and more involved in the propaganda actions, extended not only to the families of their own students. In a report of March 1949 on their public work, several primary school teachers recorded their activity in the assigned area: “they did the explanatory work at the *Teșătura* factory on the importance of the youth organization”, and in “*Tușora* street they convinced several Jewish families not to leave the P.R.R.”¹². The principals insist: “comrade form teachers will write down in the attendance book under the home calls, how many families they will have visited

that day and their names”¹³; there “will be at least 6 visits a week at the students’ homes”¹⁴. Moreover, not only the form teachers, but all teachers were supposed to pay visits to the students as, on principle, “children inform their parents in a subjective manner”¹⁵, thus blocking the whole disciplinarian approach of the school.

The “visits” became an actual part of the teaching standard which teachers were paid for, that is “18 hours in class and 18 hours of social work”. These were separately evaluated, as “each secondary and primary school teacher [had] to have a notebook where he/ she notes that: on this or that day he/ she worked in a Cultural House”, they had to write down the school meetings in which they had participated and detail the “visits to the children’s places”¹⁶. *By self-registering the activity, a certain evasion from the real world was also allowed, encouraging the exaggeration of one’s own activity or, at least, its adjusting to the time’s language.*

The resizing of this practice – at least at a discourse level – became flagrant, immediately after 1948¹⁷. From its initial purpose, that of a rather exceptional intervention in the student’s life, strictly aiming at the correction of his school situation, a clear step was made towards the intention to watch the whole family, all of which was liable to disobey the requests of the time. The suspicions were not completely new. They had manifested themselves in the pre-communist period, in the form of almost ritualistic accusations – but less vehemently exposed – and reaching the same registers¹⁸. At that time, however, there still prevailed the common sense opinion that “school is an institution that endures due to the existence of the family, of the society, and it is not society which is the subordinate of school. If family did not exist, school would not exist”¹⁹. The possible defects or tensions fell



to the educator to solve, who had to fight on “two fronts: that of the school and that of the family”, to harmonize them and not to prove them guilty²⁰.

Now, however, the family had to be controlled regarding the way in which, in its turn, it controlled its children. The Soviet model was already a sanctioned reference mark, and the popularization writings explained that in the USSR “teachers visit students home, to see if they have a good behaviour, if they take care of their books, notebooks and personal assets and if they study diligently”²¹. Culpabilities were detailed and diversified. Disinterest in the school work and results was now aggravated²² because of a Marxist commonplace, of the improper life conditions or inadequate labour relations in the family, directly injurious to the school’s immediate targets. With this perspective on things, teachers were somehow able to exculpate themselves for the students’ failures, considering that “parents contributed to the pupils’ ignorance, through the work they did at home”²³ or, to be more precise, that “the family prevents them from school’s responsibilities: it sends them to fetch gas, cornflour, etc.”²⁴, also “many mothers ask the schoolgirls to do domestic works, [so they have] no time to study and school results are weak, as they don’t have any time left. Others cannot do their homework because in the same room stay many other persons with different discussions [*sic*] or even parties with music and dances, etc.”²⁵.

The theory of the inadequate working conditions amplified in time and finally imposed itself through the pedagogues’ authorized voice, who asked the parents to actually organize a micro-school at their home, ignoring the families’ effective functioning and the low level of resources of most people. Moreover, the interfering with a family’s private life could

occur under the pretext of the best intentions possible: “To learn, you first need a proper place [...]. This is a well-known reality, written in all the books of hygiene and pedagogical psychology, uttered in all the school meetings with parents and admitted by all parents and yet, the fact remains that you might still find a child writing his homework on a chair or on the corner of the kitchen table [...], studying with his fingers in his ears, in a room where everybody else is listening to the radio or, on the contrary, reading or writing in bed [...]. Unfortunately, the child is often interrupted while studying, to go buy the father’s newspaper, to fetch firewood or something from the basement [...] to help his younger brother solve a mathematics problem [...] all these things take time and cause tiredness”²⁶.

Home visits to verify the way in which parents did their school-related task remained valid until the regime’s collapse – and even afterwards – especially for the primary school and first part of the secondary one. “Monthly visits were paid, as this was part of a primary school teacher’s attributions, to verify [...] the ‘working rooms’ and the ‘notebooks of supplementary homework’ ”²⁷. The intensity of such a form of control over the family weakened in time, being rather conditioned by the educators’ personal zeal and less by the administrative pressures in the system.

Meetings, committees, work plans

The new “democratic” power was really fond of inventorying and mobilizing the masses. The students’ parents were not omitted. The assemblies, the meetings and their more limited corollaries – committees, commissions, and delegations – became a purpose in itself. Their politicization was coupled, in this case, with the intention to re-educate parents through a simplistic and

aggressive pedagogical discourse, fed by a novel literature in the field, of Soviet origin.

In the first years after the war, the presence of the families in the school actions was still a very limited and strictly circumstantial one²⁸. Shortly afterwards, meetings of the form teachers with the parents started to appear, trying to prolong the customary festivals – like the “winter traditions festival” – with some “parents’ meeting for an educational purpose”. The purpose of meetings was an obviously propagandistic one, as the form teachers were to show “the advantages that the State offers through scholarships, books, etc.”. In other words, they had to “provoke” the parents to join the new regime’s discourse, be it in “a critical way”²⁹. In the new vision upon the family, parents were infantilized to such an extent, that they were to be surveyed too, not only during school, but during holidays as well³⁰. Or, on the contrary, they were treated like employees of the institution, compelled to participate in everything they were asked for: in adorning the classrooms³¹, in public “manifestations”³² or in the local efforts in the “fight for peace”. The principal could solve immediately, in an administrative and, often, simply declarative way, situations of the most unexpected nature, aiming at co-opting families in the school life – especially the political one: “comrades form teachers are asked to urgently organize the Committees of fight for peace in their forms, which should be made up of 2 or 3 pupils, 2 parents and the form teacher in question”³³. Entering normality, such committees endured for years, through proposals or self-proposals coming from the people directly concerned, the parents³⁴.

For their disciplining, the same methods used with the pupils were deployed, including the written registration of the attendance rate³⁵, public reprimands or direct pressures from the more influential persons – just like the weak students were

ascribed to the better ones to be looked after.

An obliging parent proposed, in October 1953, that “comrade parents who are present should mobilize the ones who are absent as well”³⁶. Furthermore, the chairman of a school committee suggested that “the parents with a known stronger influence should visit the home of the parents whose children are weaker, as far as their studying results or discipline are concerned”³⁷. Briefly, the people present at the school’s summon were supposed to act “like propagandists among the other parents”, the foundation of a special committee of “pedagogical propaganda” being even foreseen³⁸. The plea for the school’s interests – as well as those of the Party – could go even further. A school committee of 1957 aimed at “contacting [...] the factories where the parents are working, to determine them to acknowledge the compulsory nature of the 7 form education in cities and to support the children” and, moreover, to organize “consultations of parents with the neighbourhood deputies at school, to draw comrades deputies in the support of schooling (and the elimination of illiteracy)”³⁹.

The demands for the parents multiplied so quickly that it seemed probable for them to become a kind of unpaid pedagogues or form teachers of the school, involved in the recapitulation of the subject matter for examinations⁴⁰ or in the reading and writing teaching⁴¹ and therefore obliged to keep up with the specialized literature. Brief notifications and prescriptions presented the new educational stereotypes that, theoretically, were supposed to broaden the parents’ pedagogical horizon. A whole literature meant to “help the parents” proliferated, invoked, however, in a very school-like, reductionist way. Several bibliographical references were even presented in parents’ meetings, phrased like “comrade





chairman proposes [...] that a comrade teacher from the school should make a review for the book of [A.S.] Makarenko, *Cartea pentru părinți* [*The Book for Parents*]⁴² or “comrade Principal [...] advises the parents to read from [A.M.] Filip[p]ov”⁴³. Just like the children, the adults were constrained to enter their names in compulsory subscriptions. The school committee was supposed to take care, among other things, of this one, striving, for instance, to “obtain [...] the subscribing of a certain number of parents (10) to *Gazeta învățământului* [*Education System Gazette*]⁴⁴.”

It is true that there was a real lack of personnel to cope with all the requirements of the time. In a meeting, the Principal of an important High School from Iași, insistently resumed the demand for the parents to “survey how they do their homework, to control their attendance, not to be late for school and when they return home”, as “we do not have headmistresses any more and comrade teachers do not have time any more”⁴⁵. Some of them even had personal initiatives for improving the school activity, exaggerating and needing to be calmed down by the experienced teachers⁴⁶ or other parents (able to admit that the students are not learning machines, that they need a certain freedom, be it a “tactfully guided one”⁴⁷).

The parents committees had their own “work plans”⁴⁸, in parallel with the strictly school ones, and comparable to those of other contemporary organizations. Support committees appeared as well, for each of the classes, which took care, on the one hand, of the small problems inherent to any pupils “collective” – assisting the form teachers and, on the other hand, tried to fulfil the solicitation of the “school committee”. In the “work plan” of such an administrative body, one of the duties was, for instance, the reorganization of the class

committees which, in their turn, were going to “hold monthly meetings”. Each of these were made of 3 persons and it was recommendable that the chairman “should rather be the father of the best schoolboy (school-girl) in class”, thus coupling the children’s value hierarchy with that of the parents, according to the same school criteria. It was also proposed that the meetings should observe the planning made by the form teachers, who were also supposed to be handed in, afterwards, the “respective notebooks with the reports” of the meetings, as well “with the contributions [donations]” made⁴⁹.

The school parents’ committee was a partner of the institution management, with apparently impressive prerogatives (including that of criticizing, occasionally, some states of things), but actually holding the ingrate duty to always improvise solutions to cover the eternal material privations of the school. The often flagrant discordance between the rhetorical – political or pedagogical – level and the practical one, of the daily blockades, remained a consistent element of the time. After a possible bombastic preamble – about the international situation, the new Party documents, or the special care the “popular” regime shows to the school system – the meetings abruptly attacked the real and pressing issues, like the lack of fuel for winter, the lack of funds for necessary repairs, the lack of necessary tools in the workshops, the necessary food supplies for the children, the deficit of schoolbooks, the overloaded daily programme (usually because of the insufficient space), the organization of some trip or of the Christmas tree festival, etc.

As many of the problems were actually the same as before the war, people easily resorted to the same solutions used then. The most frequent ones were based upon the parents’ benevolence. They collected objects or products for the school and

lent money to engage a theatre performance for students – for them to buy the tickets from school afterwards, for a small extra-price – or to organize a profit-party. To increase the attractiveness and the attendance rate on such occasions, a buffet, a tombola or an auction with objects made by the students were arranged, voluntarily again. The donations that the parents were asked for – not only to answer real needs, but also for propaganda reasons – were extended to sizes that had never been reached before. In 1950, among the teachers' extra-curricular responsibilities, there was also that of convincing the pupils that "with a view to supporting the Korean people [...] clothing items will be collected for our Korean brothers in want"; to force somehow the participation, the collection was to take place, this time, "at one's home"⁵⁰. Although the whole population was living in serious penury, the parents were insistently invited to send to school "clothes and shoes for the poor students and for the illiterates [*sic*]"⁵¹. The fiction of a more equitable redistribution of the general lack helped the regime look more generous than it really was.

So were perpetuated the attributes, conducts and practices of the former school committees, as well as their main function, that of improving the chronic deficit of the resources allotted to the system of public education. Against the background of this inheritance, several forms of auto-funding were cultivated, which successfully survived after the collapse of the communist regime. In time, the money collection widely spread, under the appearance of non-coercive measures – they were, moreover, called "self-impositions", "benevolent contributions", "quotas" or just "funds" – but it was so insistently solicited, that it became very hard to avoid. Initially, it answered some occasional needs, often borrowing the form of recoverable loans. But, in a few

years after the setting up of the "popular democracy", it became quasi-permanent. Actually, while abolishing the former tax system the students were imposed – having the same final purpose, of acquiring the necessary assets for the maintenance and development of the school – another one was founded. The "school fund", often coupled with the "class fund" remained valid after the regime's collapse, out of the same reasons, and holding, furthermore, the convincing force of a generally accepted practice, for so many decades. The phenomenon is related to the same practical reasons, and not to the political ones, as the 'wooden language' of the time could not have continuously eluded reality. On the contrary, the contrast between the official formulas and the daily details is so flagrant, that it gets us even closer to the human side of the former life – petty maybe, touching maybe, but certainly authentic⁵².

Discordances of this kind suggest a different aspect as well: *because of the very insistence of bringing families closer to school, the institution was gradually permeated by some specific conducts of the private life, a fact that also originates in certain gender or social status modifications of the participation in public life.* According to the new ideology, the composition of the school committees changed compared to the previous period⁵³ – when they were made of important men of the community – more and more women being involved⁵⁴. Generally, less prestigious representatives of the students' families were admitted. For instance, in November 1953, in a famous High school of Iași, besides the chairman of the Committee, who was an engineer and "former Principal of the School of roads", two common workers were elected as deputy chairmen, a fact that the Principal of the High School explained





by stating that “we thus tighten the relationships between the progressive intellectual class and the working class”⁵⁵. In reality, the option was not an ideological, but a strictly circumstantial one: a mother invited to join the committee refused, being “too busy”, and the second new member was proposed because “his activity was known and he has 2 girls in this school”, and, moreover, he was said to have “worked together with his wife”, probably in the school’s interest again⁵⁶. The banality of this common fact received, at the last moment, an over-interpretation, favoured by the time propaganda.

Yet, a certain continuity with the realities and the practices previous to the communist regime could not be avoided. The most important functions were still held by the persons with a substantial social visibility and authority (preferably men), capable of imposing themselves in front of the others and to be effectively useful to the school’s activities.

In fact, beyond the long claimed duty of the educators to maintain a tight relationship with the students’ families, their actual interest was usually directed towards only two categories of parents: those of the “problem-students” and the ones who could do all kinds of unpaid jobs for the school. The problem of the students that did not comply with the system’s requests grew more and more violent during the communist regime, when the school quantifiable results (grades, numbers of non-attendances, awards, number of students that graduated or not, etc.) became a purpose in itself, assiduously surveyed – a competition in which the parents were involved as well – because it was, in the logic of the system, an equivalent of the “production rate” of any State factory.

As soon as it apprehended such a case, the management of the institution

asked “for the family to be announced”. Moreover, the more serious disciplinary punishments could not be applied unless it was ritually confirmed that everything had been done to avoid it, including students’ previous denouncement to the family. Any dereliction of the children could be reproached to the parents who had not educated them properly: “unmotivated non-attendances; [the fact] that some students do not wear their uniforms; being late for classes; staying in the passageways after the bell-ringing [to announce the beginning of the class]; insufficient care for the assets they use; [the fact] that they are not filled with the sense of discipline and order”, etc.⁵⁷. But the form teachers could not do it all – not even all of the reproaches. Consequently, most of the times, they confined themselves to announcing the parents about their children’s “bad grades”. The exculpations, even the self-critical ones, suggest the real limitation of the contacts with parents. In one trimestrial report, a female teacher admitted that “the relationship with the parents was not quite consistent” and that she “could not visit all of the students”, assuring however that she “visited 2 or 3 times the ones who had the worst results in class”⁵⁸. But even the worst students were too many, so the teachers could not directly contact all of their families, contenting themselves to notify them, in writing, about the school situation. The principals were announced that “notifications were typed for parents, about the students’ bad grades”⁵⁹.

The parents who could and were willing to help in a concrete way – with objects, repairing assistance, persuading authorities in the school’s interest or by using practical knowledge, like cooking or book-keeping, etc. – were a real capital for every school, and even for every teacher. For a fair sharing of benefits, the primary school headmistresses were told to distribute, “the children, from the beginning of first grade,



according to the parents' professions: you have a doctor, give me the manager, I'll give you the lathe man, 'cause I have the house painter"⁶⁰. Involving the useful parents became a real stake of the school, especially in the last decade of the regime, when all institutions reached the limit of the blockade, and most of the inhabitants were constrained to serious surviving efforts, because of the prolonged economic and administrative crisis. A careful observer could distinguish, with enough sharpness, the real distribution of power in the socialist society, genuinely democratic through the generalization of the corruption, barter and intimidation practices. Penury and hypocrisy made it easier to get "for each and every individual a small portion of power"; the teacher, for instance, could give a good grade to the butcher's son or wait first for "his old man to come" and bring her some meat⁶¹. An exacerbation of this interest was reached in those years, the children being mainly perceived according to the parents' more or less attractive situation or attitude⁶².

Interests and negotiations inside the system

The internal documents of the school system betray many of the failures or areas of grave non-adherence to the policies of the time. The cultivation of the so-called "relationship" between school and family was not an exception. Discrepancies are even more visible in the personal testimonies of those who attended school at that time, as they appear in their diaries, interviews or memoirs.

From the administrative school documents, we find out that the wish to co-opt parents in their children's education as tightly as possible was never fully accomplished. The guilt was usually that of the teachers, who, in their turn, exculpated themselves⁶³ invoking either the parents'

lack of cooperation or the practical ineffectiveness of their own approaches. Paradoxically, by the very fact that it was not exhausted, this relation could also become a potential panacea for the recovery of the pupils' school situation, relieving the teachers of responsibility and promising a form of future retrieval.

The parents as well seem to have made theirs the axiom of a good cooperation between school and family, eventually reproaching the "lacks in the form teachers' activity: too few home visits, the absence of the correspondence [with the parents] notebooks"⁶⁴. But the very conformation to such demands could demonstrate the most convincingly their inefficiency. An 8-grade form teacher, summarizing the efforts she had made all over one trimester, reported that she had "made 17 home visits, finding out that where the student works, 4-5 persons live, although some of the pupils with weak grades live alone"⁶⁵, thus undermining the Marxist myth of the propitious work conditions, which should have automatically led to better school results. She underlined that – in spite of all debates about the parents' responsibilities – most of the students carry on their daily programme under no one's surveillance. So that, the fact that she fulfilled her duty and went to the pupils' homes could not, eventually, bring forth spectacular changes in their school condition. In fact, in spite of all her good intentions, she could not reach all the students' homes, impeded by the "dwellings' dispersion"; generally, her initiatives were blocked by "the parents' non-attendance of meetings in a satisfactory rate [and by] their material lacks, [so that] it was not possible to collect [even] the small sums of money necessary to certain needs (like the emblems on the children's coat sleeve)"⁶⁶.

Those who collaborated very scrupulously thought they were right, in their



turn, to criticize the others' non-attendance. The participants even accused, with a certain aggressiveness, the physical absence or the merely decorative presence of some others. The report of a meeting, for instance, reads: "comrade Schwartz shows that a big part of the guilt [for the children's weak results] was to be blamed on the parents, as they do not come to school when they are called for. *Today even, in the plenum, there is not even a quarter of the parents* (our emphasis, C.M.)⁶⁷. The same person, in a different meeting, called attention on the fact "that parents should take the floor more often", suggesting that their passiveness is a sign of guilt: "[these] parents are probably not interested in the child's situation"⁶⁸. In spite of all persuasive efforts, it was clear that – according to the former habits – "there are many parents who only come to school at the beginning and at the end of the year"⁶⁹. Thus, it was very likely that in the meetings, out of a form of 33 students, "only 4-5 parents would be usually present"⁷⁰.

Of those who constantly came to school, some answered with special solicitude to the institution's needs. The favours that were thus done were of a quite confusing, but very suggestive diversity, reflecting the schools' chronic incapacity to solve their everyday problems. In 1953, in an important girl school in Iasi, the parents themselves chose a "commission [...] to intervene with the CFR [Romanian Railways] to get some possibilities to overfeed part of the feeble schoolgirls"⁷¹. On a different occasion, sceptical about the quality of some products ordered for the school, the same parents proposed for the reception to be made by "specialists from the Committee" and, to make it even safer, the very chairman of the Committee "took the pledge to speak with two foremen from the Polytechnic to make" some of the objects that

the hostel needed⁷². In order to make permanent the help given to the school, a previous selection of the volunteers was eventually come to, who were supposed to be available from the very beginning, according to the professional endowments and the facilities they could dispose of⁷³.

But volunteering was not, as one might think, from the time propaganda, a disinterested one. Sometimes, the bargain was an explicit one, as the school was to satisfy the precise complaints of the offeror. For instance, in a meeting, a parent was saying that he "could help the school with some necessary things for physics" and then complaining that his "little daughter is not appreciated in the psychology class, when she did not understand things very well, she had a 2/[10] and then when she knew the answers, she had a 2 again, [the teacher] discouraging her from studying", thus clearly suggesting the expected service in return⁷⁴.

The constant presence at school, the proposed services and the authority that the parents were endowed with by the institutionalization of their presence could become profitable for those who had the ability and the courage to use the context. The pleas for each one's private interest were often starting from pointing out different inconvenient aspects – that the students did not have schoolbooks⁷⁵, that they could not be offered working conditions home⁷⁶, that they were overburdened by school or, on the contrary, that they were not paid the necessary attention and comprehension⁷⁷. One of the families' eternal discontents was related to the children's timetable and prolonged programme, especially because of the extracurricular activities. Some of the parents even criticized the basic components of schooling – "they are given too many exercises and problems to solve in mathematics and the kids are rather puzzled, they'd better have fewer and solve them

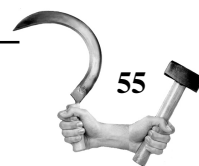
all⁷⁸ – probably comparing them, in the subtext, with their own school experience, which had not been so exhausting. The discrepancies had several causes, besides the subjectivity of the people concerned. Among other things, the Soviet model of the new school was to be blamed, which particularly insisted upon the exact sciences, on the quantity of taught information and on their intense repetition practicing. Whatever the context, *the finality of such complaints was the same: to help one's child – even for a short while – in the tough competition between the everyday life reality and the regime's formative exigencies.*

Though not frequently, the documents also register explicit cases of school authority challenging, by parents who were trying to protect their children from the – actual or imagined – aggression of the educators. In a meeting, such a parent personally attacked the incriminated teacher: “comrade Cheptene shows that his daughter has the will to learn, but she is insulted by comrade form teacher Negru who, instead of encouraging her, discourages her⁷⁹. The arguing can reach remarkable rhetorical refinement, even by using the time's propaganda weaponry, which emphasized the educators' obligations in the children's proper breeding. Thus, to defend the above mentioned individual, “comrade Iliescu [showed] that the Party and the Government do not teach [us] that the children should be insulted by teachers, like comrade Cheptene complained⁸⁰. But, probably most of the times, parents did not dare face the system or did not manage to impose themselves. They could not, for instance, refuse the absurd collections system imposed in the '80s (bottles, glass jars, waste sheets, medicinal herbs, etc.). This was probably the reason why not one in a thousand tried to do it⁸¹. As for the more delicate issues, like the too low grades in the trimestrial test papers, a challenge was even counter-indicated, as it

was likely to turn back against the complainer.

The child could receive an even lower grade or lose the precious place in a good high school or in a ‘special form’. The parents knew it directly from the teachers⁸². It could have been even worse, for a parent to be completely overwhelmed by the situation and confess his/ her incapacity in front of the authorities, even the supra-school ones. For instance, in a Pedagogical Council, the case of a problem-student was debated: besides the indiscipline problems, “in some subjects, like History, he even has reactionary impulses”. The form teacher exculpated himself stating that he contacted his mother “several times, and the last time, the student's mother affirmed she did not know what else to do, and that she was forced to appeal to the *Securitate* to find out what activities his son engages in besides school⁸³”.

The most frequently used method was that of direct persuasion and influence traffic, often coupled with presents or personal services in return. As we know, it was not a really new one. At the end of the '50s, people were still discussing, with a certain innocence, about the fact that “presents from the parents” could be sent to the teachers, the only objection being that, in order not to mix them up with the school donations, they should be made “separately, at their homes⁸⁴. The general opinion was that it mainly spread under the communist regime, with worrisome sizes in its last decade. Seen from outside the socialist camp, the phenomenon also looked very degrading, as “children find out everyday about bribery, presents, upper protection [...] for instance [about] the habit to offer presents to teachers, on different festive occasions – a habit that did not exist in the Romanian school 30 years before”, as Gelu Ionescu stated in a Free Europe Radio show on 8 August 1985⁸⁵. Retroactively, this





reality looks monstrous⁸⁶. But this exchange of products and services was one of the few means of survival and personal life improvement of the time and the contemporaries – in their majority – accepted it as such, despite its immorality or illegality.

Maybe just due to its tacit generalization, the phenomenon does not appear almost at all in the official documents. As expected, some accidental note can be found, recorded rather as a denial of the situation. A report from 1957, registering the discussion about the “work plan” of the school committee, noted the “deep satisfaction” of a teacher content with the fact that in front of the committee were appointed parents “of the best children [...], to escape those awkward situations of pressures and degrading interventions with telephone calls to annul the tests because I don’t know whose child is concerned”⁸⁷.

In memoirs and interviews, it can be detected quite clearly – especially for the period of acute economic crisis – that this habit also coincides with other deformations of the school life, caused by the deficit of resources, by the compulsoriness of a prolonged schooling, by a massive polytechnization, etc. since 1957-1958, for instance, when the government was aiming at moving the compulsory attendance from 4 up to 7 grades, a teacher considered that “over 50% of the candidates to the 8th grade succeed due to their social origin and protection”⁸⁸. The teachers’ professional and political overburdening under the conditions of degrading penury from the ‘80s, also contributed to the phenomenon, as well as the overvaluing of some area of schooling seen as elitist or at least profitable – a fact that invited parents to use all possible means to reach the proposed target.

Concluding this brief presentation on the issue of the relationship between the

communist regime school and the students’ families, we must call the reader’s attention on the fact that, in most of the cases, we have referred to urban phenomena, thus omitting the complex, silent and mainly disfavoured world of the villages. It is well known that the parents of the students in the rural environment were, traditionally, much more difficult to subordinate to the State authorities’ interests. Here, other stakes functioned, other persuasive mechanisms and other subspecies of school or cultural propaganda. The convincing campaigns were generally more insistent or even aggressive, according to the target pursued, which could vary a lot, from the villagers’ attraction into the State collective farms to the obligation of buying school uniforms. The “accomplishments” that the principals of the rural school could boast about were part of a different register – that of the rural festivals, of the farm campaigns, of the families’ being persuaded to let their children attend school, etc. The festivals, for instance, were not – at least, from the organizers’ standpoint – mere occasional parties, carrying a clear political message. The fact that the “hall of the Cultural House was brimful” was a reason for pride for the principal of the school which had organized the event, as this was a festival “in honour of the Day of August 23 [1944, considered to be a symbolic beginning of the communist regime in Romania]” and the same occasion was used to “distribute the 40% wheat quota for the collectivists”⁸⁹.

But to understand this world, a different look and a different time are needed.



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Translated by Evagrina Dîrțu

Notes

¹ In 1947, the school festival at the end of the academic year was, just like before, an event that the community was waiting for, related to the mandatory ritual of the school life. In spite of the everyday tension and privation, “many people participated in the festival, children’s parents, citizens from the neighbourhood” and the prize award ceremony “made the children’s parents content, given the way in which school functioned this academic year, with no firewood, etc.”, a document of the time reads (see the County Department of the National Archives of Iași – CDNAI in the following – “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 3/1949, p. 9).

² In a document of 1944, we read that “on the basis of the convocation published in the ‘Moldova Liberă’ newspaper [...] on November 11, 1944, the high school students’ parents or tutors was [*sic*] gathered in general assembly” (CDNAI, The National High School fund, file 31/1944, *Registru de procese verbale ale comitetului școlar nov. 1944-iunie 1945 [Register of reports of the school committees November 1944/ June 1945, p. 1]*). Here is, for instance, what the report of the Committee from June 17,



1945, writes about the gathering of such a forum immediately after the war: “a number of 95 parents and teachers is present, the students’ parents from series B, coming from the Theoretical Boys’ High School are almost all absent, the teachers of series B too, as well as half the committee. The coincidence is that the General Assembly is to be held on the same date and at the same hour as the commemoration of the pogrom of Iași. But the assembly has to be held with any number of participants, as it is the second summon, according to the publication” (*Ibidem*, p. 51). The Theoretical Boys High School – that had been founded in the difficult context of the ‘40s particularly for the Jewish students – was, in fact, to be merged with the National High School, recently returned from refuge and claiming back the space and didactic resources it had abandoned. The B series parents’ and teachers’ massive absence in the assembly was probably a form of protest against this hasty abolishing of the school they had supported up to then. The Jewish community had effectively participated in its maintenance and equipment, as one could see in the inventory that it was supposed to get back (*Ibidem*, p. 60).

³ CDNAI, “Al. I.Cuza” High School fund, file 3/1944, p. 2.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3 v.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 15. See also CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 3/1946, p. 1.

⁶ *Ibidem*. Moreover, in the spring of the same year, the students were still scheduled by the school to go, in groups, to confess and communicate for Easter; in February next year, all the school’s teachers were participating, as godparents, in the baptizing of a poor newborn from the neighbourhood (*Ibidem*, pp 5 v. and 14).

⁷ CDNAI, “Al. I.Cuza” High School fund,

file 3/1944, p. 3.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 3 v.

⁹ For lack of other means, the teachers were eventually resorting to pupils to “ask the parents to lend, for the class’ use, a chair, a table and an icon” or “to bring 2,000-10,000 lei each, to acquire the roll records” (*Ibidem*, p. 2 r-v).

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 10 r.-v.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 14 v.

¹² CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 3/1946, p. 48 v.

¹³ Document from 1950 (CDNAI, National High School fund, file 7/1950, *Condica de comunicări pentru profesori [Book of Notifications for Teachers]*, p. 2).

¹⁴ Document from 1952 (CDNAI, “C. Negruzzi” Boarding High School fund, file 20/1951, *Registru de procese verbale ale Consiliului pedagogic [Register of Reports of the Pedagogical Committee]*, p. 111).

¹⁵ Document from 1955 (CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 7/1955, *Registru de procese verbale ale Consiliului pedagogic [Register of Reports of the Pedagogical Committee]*, p. 6).

¹⁶ Document from 1956 (*Ibidem*, p. 20).

¹⁷ Phrases that were not specific to the local school discourse started appearing: “*let us intensify the activity in class, trying to improve the work [...] with both students and parents, to insistently call them to come in our support, to correct the attendance rate, discipline, cleanness, the preservation of the school’s assets, etc. We commit ourselves, as soon as students miss classes, to go visit them home to convince the parents not to keep the pupils from their homework. We commit ourselves (our emphasis, C.M.) not to leave behind any student that we should not have visited home to inquire for his social status (author’s emphasis). On this occasion, we shall identify the students*



who deserve scholarships and aids” (document from 1949; CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 3/1946, p. 42).

¹⁸ “Many of the bad things that school suffers from are mainly due to the parents, who, showing no interest in their children [...] hinder the good results they might have. The children [...] should not waste their time [...] they must be surveyed, so that there would be no danger for them to be enslaved by those pleasures that risk their health” (Gh. I. Ignat, *Școala, familia și societate* [School, family and society], Iași, Viața Românească, 1930, p. 4-5). The voice of the school authority was very categorical in its stand, suggesting an indisputable hierarchy: “we must not condemn and judge in the children’s presence the school, the teachers, the curricula” (*Ibidem*, p. 8).

¹⁹ I.C. Spiridon, *Școala și familia (Probleme de educație)* [School and Family (Education Issues)], Tipografia “I. Bendit”, 1942, p. 3.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

²¹ Petru Vintilă, *Familia sovietică* [The Soviet Family], 2nd ed., București, “Cartea Rusă”, 1948, p. 46.

²² This lack of interest was invoked other times as well. The pathetic recommendations made before the ‘40s suggest, in fact, the wide ignorance in this respect: “parents should inquire for their children’s evolution in school [...] always ask and see whether they accomplish their duties, study their lessons and have good grades” (Gh. I. Ignat, *op.cit.*, p. 9, 10). The best surveillance was still that controlled by school and the best educational variant was considered to be the one including a boarding regime (*Ibidem*, p. 10).

²³ Document from 1949 (CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 3/1946, p. 66).

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 76 v.

²⁵ Document from 1956 (CDNAI, “Oltea Doamna” High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 87 v.).

²⁶ Mihai Ghivirigă, *Ritmuri zilnice. Organizarea regimului de viață în familia cu mai mulți copii* [Daily Rhythms. Organizing Life Programme in Multiple Children Families], București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1967, pp. 38, 43, 44.

²⁷ *Mărturii orale. Anii ’80 și bucureștenii* [Oral Testimonies. The ‘80s and the Bucharest Inhabitants], București, Editura Paideia, 2003, p. 327.

²⁸ Thus, at the end of February 1948, in a small school in Iasi, some parents came in person to help in the children’s delousing campaign. On a Sunday morning, in each classroom appeared several mothers who helped ridding the children of lice, sprinkling with lamp oil and ironing the clothes (CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 3/1946, pp. 15 r.-v. and 16).

²⁹ Document from 1948 (*Ibidem*, p. 38).

³⁰ The same document recommended: “the children should be provided conduct rules for the holidays [...]. Children and parents will have to note down their impression (our emphasis, C.M.)” (*Ibidem*).

³¹ A document from 1958, for instance, proposed that “the parents should help the form teachers and the elementary school teachers to decorate the classrooms” (CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 7/1955, p. 70 v.).

³² In an internal document, for instance, the problem was raised of a “school event in which the students’ parents should participate, on 28 May 1950, at 10 a.m.” (CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 3/1946, p. 95).

³³ CDNAI, National High School fund, file 7/1950, p. 91.

³⁴ Document from 1954 (CDNAI, “Oltea Doamna” High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 35).

³⁵ An advertisement from 1951 announced that “tomorrow, 11 November, at 10 a.m. the



parents' plenum will take place in the festival hall of the school. All parents are kindly asked to participate. *The roll will be called* (our emphasis, C.M.)" (CDNAI, National High School fund, file 7/1950, p. 58 v.)

³⁶ Document from 1953 (CDNAI, "Oltea Doamna" High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 7 v.).

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 9v.

³⁹ Document from 1957 (CDNAI, "Ilie Pintilie" High School fund, file 7/1955, pp. 48 v. and 49).

⁴⁰ A teacher proposed, in 1953, that "in order to convince the parents about the importance of recapitulation [...] a parents' plenum should be convoked, for them to be asked to give their support during the recapitulation period" (CDNAI, "C. Negruzzi" Boarding High School fund, file 20/1951, p. 153).

⁴¹ For the 1954-1955 academic year, the duties of the parents involved in the activity of a High School of Iași could have been summarized as follows: "there should be a parent on call, [and] should help the form teacher to survey the attendance rate, study, discipline – a parents' attendance book will be created. There will be organized lectures with the parents – special courses for the education of parents, who will, in their turn, do propaganda among the masses [...] a city workshop will be made for the repairing of school supplies, that the parents will have to equip with tools. The parents will assist in the read-and-write learning" (CDNAI, "Oltea Doamna" High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 30 v.).

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 13 v. It was probably about his writing *Despre educația școlărilor în familie* [*About the Schoolchild's Education in Family*] (București, Editura de Stat Didactică și Pedagogică, 1952).

⁴⁴ Document from 1957 (CDNAI, "Ilie Pintilie" High School fund, file 7/1955, p. 48 v.).

⁴⁵ Document from 1953 (CDNAI, "Oltea Doamna" High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 14).

⁴⁶ In a meeting, the parents asked for a closer surveillance of the schoolgirls, in the form of a "field control, a kind of a school 'securitate' [*security*, that was also the name of the political police of the time]", to which the Principal answered that "for the boarders we ensure the surveillance and this is not the case for us to use the word of security", but if "some of the mothers want to help us, they might come to the hostel to help maintaining discipline" – so that they would not be completely discouraged in their desire to help the school (*Ibidem*, pp. 14 v. and 15).

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, the "work plan" of the school committee of the "Oltea Doamna" High School, for the period 15 October 1955-15 October 1956. Under this pretentious name, the text was actually gathering several modest and completely apolitical wishes like: for the schoolgirls to receive an extra-dish during the examinations period; for the poor children to obtain, by donations, clothes; for the classroom doors to be endowed with keys; for the schoolgirls to be monthly taken to a theatre performance (*Ibidem*, pp. 58 r.-v. and 60).

⁴⁹ Document from 1957 (CDNAI, "Ilie Pintilie" High School fund, file 7/1955, p. 48 v.).

⁵⁰ CDNAI, National High School fund, file 7/1950, p. 10.

⁵¹ Document from 1952 (*Ibidem*, p. 81 v.).

⁵² Trying to adapt the language of the "proletarian democracy", the documents were registering phrases like "for the success of



the festival, the parents' Committee commits itself to organize a buffet" (CDNAI, "Oltea Doamna" High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 20 v.). Reality was much more prosaic, and unrepresentable from a propaganda point of view, as the lists of donations were a faithful mirroring of the everyday life. The parents – especially the mothers, who had the best capacity to speak about the family's food reserves, and find their optimal utilization – promised limited participations, in accordance to the crisis of those years, confined to "a cake; ½ l. oil; 2 white loaves and 10 cakes; 5 eggs and 100 nuts; 1 kg. salami and sausages; 3 kg. fruit; lard; ½ kg. sugar", etc. (*Ibidem*, p. 10).

⁵³ The law of primary and normal education from 1939 also reminded of the existence of the school committees, which had to assist – together with other local officials – the good evolution of each institution apart (Cătălina Mihalache, *Reforma școlară din 1948, un succes al propagandei comuniste* [*The School Reform of 1948, a Success of the Communist Propaganda*], in "Anuarul Institutului de Istorie «A.D. Xenopol»", vol. LXV, 2008, p. 367).

⁵⁴ The members of such a committee decided in 1951, after having been elected, that "subsequently, it should be increased, co-opting especially female comrades, that should carry on the mobilization efforts among the students' mothers", these ones being particularly useful for the organization and fulfilment of different practical actions, traditionally associated with the domestic talents (CDNAI, "C. Negruzzi" Boarding High School fund, file 3/1951-1954, p. 329).

⁵⁵ Document from 1953 (CDNAI, "Oltea Doamna" High School fund, file 50/1953, p.16).

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ Document from 1966 (CDNAI, "C. Negruzzi" Boarding High School fund, file 1/1962, p. 360).

⁵⁸ Document from 1958 (CDNAI, "Ilie Pintilie" High School fund, file 7/1955, p. 56 v.).

⁵⁹ Document from 1956 (CDNAI, "Ilie Pintilie" High School fund, file 7/1955, p. 14 v.).

⁶⁰ *Mărturii orale ... [Oral Testimonies ...]*, p. 74.

⁶¹ Doina Jela, *Telejurnalul de noapte. Jurnal [Night News. Diary]*, Iași, Polirom, 1997, p. 99.

⁶² The same person was complaining, unable to administrate the annoying behaviour of one of the children, about having "a disagreeable top student, like never before. I don't know whose bloody son he is, so I might explain it to myself" (*Ibidem*, p. 109).

⁶³ The distribution of guilt in the bureaucratic discourse of the Soviet (socialist) type of school was a specific attribute of the administrative or political leadership, by which it marked its quasi-discretionary power upon the subordinates (see Larry E. Holmes, *Ascent into Darkness: Escalating Negativity in the Administration of Schools in the Kirov Region, 1931-1941*, in "History of Education" vol. 35, July-September 2006, pp. 521-540). In our study, we only dealt with short sequences of the time hierarchies, involving the principals' relation to teachers and the teachers' relation to parents or students, which usually did not illustrate major discourse discrepancies. These were increasing as we move upwards to higher bodies.

⁶⁴ Document from 1954 (CDNAI, "Oltea Doamna" High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 34).

⁶⁵ Document from 1957 (CDNAI, "Ilie Pintilie" High School fund, file 7/1953, p. 53).

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*

⁶⁷ Document from 1953 (CDNAI, "Oltea Doamna" High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 14 v.).



⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁶⁹ Document from 1954 (*Ibidem*, p. 35).

⁷⁰ Document from 1958 (CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 7/1955, p. 56 v.).

⁷¹ CDNAI, “Oltea Doamna” High School fund, file 50/1953, p. 17.

⁷² *Ibidem*, pp. 93 v. and 94.

⁷³ Starting from a circumstantial situation (“comrade principal shows that [...] 20 keys are needed”), a parent was eventually in charge of recruiting those “who know some craft” and could be useful in “fulfilling works from the plan proposed [by the school committee]” (document from 1955; *Ibidem*, p. 58 v.).

⁷⁴ Document from 1956 (*Ibidem*, p. 90).

⁷⁵ The lack of textbooks was always a reality, more or less successfully administered by the system. In spite of the gratuities that the communist regime claimed, this crisis was never solved, and in the first decade after the war it was a seriously grave one. Sometimes, the parents were openly declaring their incapacity, announcing that they could not “acquire the books because of the lack of money” (document from 1954; *Ibidem*, p. 27).

⁷⁶ In front of the offensive taken on the theme of the studying conditions that the children should have had, some of the parents were simply giving up, declaring that they could not offer it to them. Finally, the demands were turning against the emitter, who was directly solicited to intervene and help those who were in difficult situations. We thus find cases in which, preventing the accusations for possible weak school results, the parents defended themselves through personal complaints like: some one’s “daughter does not have the possibility to study, because she has a room of 4X4 meters and wants to make her homework in school” or the family “lives at a big distance from here and [...] asks for its

children to take lunch at school and make the homework with the inner headmistresses” (documents from 1956; *Ibidem*, pp. 87 r.-v. and 90 v.).

⁷⁷ This kind of complaints is actually substantial with the functioning of modern public education. We should only note its perpetuation, as it can be seen in notes like “comrade Feller took the floor and said he has a daughter in 5th grade and she is shy and he asks the teachers to be patient until she is better” (documents from 1956; *Ibidem*, pp. 87 r.-v.).

⁷⁸ Document from 1956 (*Ibidem*, p. 90 v.).

⁷⁹ Document from 1953 (*Ibidem*, p. 21).

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*

⁸¹ Doina Jela, *op.cit.*, p. 214.

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 313-314.

⁸³ Document from 1952 (CDNAI, “C. Ne-gruzzi” Boarding High School fund, file 20/1951, p. 61).

⁸⁴ CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 7/1955, p. 49.

⁸⁵ Cătălina Mihalache, *Antireformă și reformă în școală, la căderea regimului comunist [Antireform and Reform in School at the Communist Regime’s Collapse]*, in “Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review”, vol. VIII, no. 4, 2008, p. 862.

⁸⁶ See a detailed description of the mechanism of present collection and distribution, especially as far as the primary schools were involved, in *Mărturii orale... [Oral Testimonies...]*, p. 73.

⁸⁷ CDNAI, “Ilie Pintilie” High School fund, file 7/1955, p. 48v.

⁸⁸ Traian Chelariu, *Strada Lebedei nr. 8. Pagini de jurnal [Lebedei 8 Street. Diary Pages]*, București, Editura Paideia, 2002, p. 235.

⁸⁹ Document from 1961 (CDNAI, School of Șcheia fund, file 586/1960-1961, pp. 475 v. and 476 v.).