

Children as the nation future in communist Romania

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This text is a draft of what is going to be published in Romanian Journal of Population Studies – December 2014 – before this date it is not allowed to reproduce the information without the author 's consent!

Introduction - The State confiscates childhood

The interpretation of the Romanian communism always starts from the idea of the adoption of the Russian model and of its adaptation to the Romanian conditions, in its most various aspects, from politics to daily life. In the present study we are trying to elucidate the problem of the children organisations from/of communist Romania both from the perspective of the Western interpretations (see Stearns, 2006) and the Soviet model (Kelly, 2007), and, most of all, from the perspective of the plans of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP; in Romanian: *Partidul Comunist Român* – PCR) regarding the role of these organisations. Our sources are the party documents issued between 1949 and 1989, regulations of the children's organisations, stenographs of the meetings of the National Council of the Pioneer Organisation (NCPO; in Romanian: *Consiliul Național al Organizației Pionierilor* – CNOP) or of the RCP, reports of the Pioneer Organisation, of the Union of Communist Youth (UCY; in Romanian: *Uniunea Tineretului Comunist* – UTC) or of the NCPO and articles that were published in children's magazines.

In the Western interpretation, the creation of children's organisations in communist societies has pursued two main goals: to inoculate as early as possible the communist ideals, through any means, from the tenderest ages, and to block the control of the parents – most of them being raised according to and familiarised with the old systems, in which the head of the family's authority was incontestable/indisputable and traditions played first fiddle – over their children, so that the mission of the state of moulding the “new man” might be successful! The communist ideologists considered the child an innocent being, good by nature, damaged by the

inequitable society and the imperfect social arrangements – they thus embraced illuminist ideals – on which one could intervene and who could be modelled according to the new ideals in order to become a better worker, a braver soldier and a more reliable citizen. According to Stearns (p. 103) “children had to be remade” and the State claimed that it knew more about the children’s needs than their own parents! More than in Western societies and much more than in any other historical period, the State substitutes the parents, by means of the schooling system, by the use of the children’s organisations and by educating the parents (in the USSR even through their own children) through various guides and advice books elaborated by the Party’s pedagogues and ideologists in strict accord with the Party’s ideals and less with parenting principles. The child is the object of state upbringing since “parents were not fully reliable for the task of raising their own children and they needed additional guidance” (Stearns, 104).

Short history of the children’s organisations

Children’s organisations have existed in the entire world long before the fascist or the socialist movements – with which they are usually associated – spread. In the 1880s, in the USA the children’s clubs organised by Charles Stelzle on the principles of Masonry were in fashion. The first known children’s organisations were founded in Great Britain and the USA. In 1884 William Smith established *Boys Brigade* and in 1899 John Paton rallied boys under the banner of *Boys Life Brigade*. Three years later, in 1902, Ernest Seton set up *Woodcraft Indians* in the United States and in 1905 Daniel Beard organised *Boy Pioneers of America*, after he had, through the organisation *Sons of Daniel Boone*, promoted for a few years the benefits of open-air activities for children (Fass, 110-113). But the most well-known movement from the beginning of the 20th century, which has rapidly expanded into the entire world and which still exists today is *Boy Scouts* (in Romanian: *Cercetaşii*), founded in Great Britain in 1908 by Robert Baden-Powell, the son of an Anglican minister, who became a general in the British army, a hero of the Boer Wars. The purpose of this primarily military organisation (even the uniforms were military) was that of creating model teenagers and adults through educating the character and building citizenship by using military exercise (training), by relying on its own code of laws and moral guide (*Scout Law*) and by taking an oath (*Scout Promise*). All these organisations had in common a few elements, amongst which adherence to a moral code, self-government, secret signs, patriotism, uniforms, rituals. Moreover, *Boy Scouts* was a religious organisation, as Baden-

Powell had introduced the religious oath and had banned the access of those who could not prove their affiliation to a church. As a matter of fact, churches had become recruiting bases for the *Boy Scouts*! After 1920, due to the numerous protests and contestations of the organisation's military character, *Boy Scouts* was organised on pacifistic principles and set for itself goals related to education and to the organisation of children's free/spare time and thus practically returned to the desiderata of the first children's clubs from the 1880s. One must also mention that although initially there were no age limits for admission into the organisation, gradually *Boy Scouts* set between 11 and 18 years of age the limits for entering and leaving the organisation. Furthermore, it must be emphasised that in 1914 the organisation had spread across 52 states, including Russia and Austria-Hungary, and that in 1918 it included 750,000 boys, amongst whom 155,000 were enrolled solely in Great Britain, the cradle of the organisation.

In the years following the First World War a massive turn takes place in the case of children's organisations as well, due to the advancement of fascism and communism, the two political and ideological extremes that have placed young people in the forefront of the revolutionary movements. Both fascism and communism have used the youth as a manoeuvre mass for a very simple reason: children and young people lacked previous political education and experience! They represented masses that were vulnerable and easy to manipulate and manoeuvre, but which were also significant from a political viewpoint. In the 1920s and 1930s, the fascist parties promised young people not only employment and educational opportunities, but also a mission that was simply divine: that of becoming the leaders of the revolutionary movement that was going to purify the nations (Fass, 343). Under the aegis of the phrase "Young people build the future", Italy and Germany, countries with a powerful national identity and a society that was very clearly divided according to gender, have fostered and nourished the most powerful children's organisations. In Italy, children aged between 8 and 14 were incorporated into the *Battilla*, a paramilitary organisation that insisted upon the boys' physical training in order for them to become better soldiers. Girls were gathered into the *Piccole Italiane*, where they were oriented/directed/guided towards domesticity and motherhood.

In Germany, immediately after Hitler took over the power, *Hitlerjugend* (*Hitler Youth*) was constituted, one of the NSDAP's paramilitary organisations, which, unlike all the children's organisations that have been brought into the discussion so far/until now, but also unlike other

similar German organisations¹, had a precisely set goal: that of cleansing the society of racial impurities (Jews, Gypsies, etc.). Like the Italian model, *Hitlerjugend* (HJ) had a boys division, the *Deutsches Jungvolk*, comprising boys with ages between 10 and 14, and the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* or the *League of German Girls*, the girls division, with ages between 10 and 18. In 1923, the organisation had approximately 1,000 members, in 1926, after its reorganisation, about 5,000 and in 1932 it included 2,300,000 members. Their number grew massively as other similar organisations were being dissolved (for example, the *Evangelische Jugend*, a Lutheran organisation with 600,000 members) or prohibited (*Boy Scouts* was forbidden in Germany and the territories controlled by the Germans after the Nazis took over the power). At the same time, there exist voices that claim that young people joined this movement voluntarily out of a desire to counter the traditional authority, regardless of its nature – familial, school-related or that exercised by the Church.

From a doctrinal viewpoint, HJ were viewed and hypostatized as future pure Arians and as a result they were indoctrinated with racist ideas, meant to motivate them to fight on all fronts for the Third Reich and to execute its missions of cleansing the country of the unwanted elements, included on the black list. Last but not least, HJ were oriented against all the religious currents and they were used for frightening and breaking the youth groups organised under the tutelage of the churches, for intimidating the participants to religious services or to the various activities organised by the churches. In other words, unlike the *Boy Scouts*, HJ were profoundly antireligious – an attitude that, as we will see, was also deeply rooted amongst the youth organisations from the USSR and Romania and probably in all the states from the former Communist bloc. This behavioural tendency represented an extension of the idea of a secular state, not subjected to the influence coming from the part of the religions, which were associated with superstitions and backwardness.

¹ The first fascist youth organisation was *Jugendbund*, established in 8 March 1922, immediately after the creation of the NSDAP. In 1924 it changed its name to *Grossdeutsche Jugendbewegung* (*Greater German Youth Movement*). In the same year 1922, in Munchen, *Jungsturm Adolf Hitler*, the paramilitary organisation of the Nazi Party, was founded, its purpose being the recruitment and military training of the future members of the *Sturmabteilung* (“Storm Regiment”), the paramilitary adult wing of the Party. After the Beer Hall Putsch (November 1923), the members of these organisations acted in illegality. When the Party was reorganised in 1926, *Grossdeutsche Jugendbewegung* became *Hitler Jugend Bund der deutschen Arbeiterjugend* (*Hitler Youth League of German Worker Youth*) under the command of Kurt Gruber, an ardent admirer of Hitler. In July 1926, Gruber managed to include his organisation into the *Sturmabteilung* and changed its name to *Hitler-Jugend*, the name under which it has functioned until 1945.

Children's organisations in the USSR

I mentioned at the beginning of this paper the ideas that have guided the communist ideologists as they outlined the directions that needed to be followed when educating the youth: firstly, to extract them from under the control and tutelage of their parents (or family), and, secondly, to mould them so that they would become trustworthy citizens and promoters of the socialist ideals. Until 1917 one cannot speak about socialist children's organisations in Russia, given the fact that even the Communist Party acted clandestinely. Moreover, one can neither say that the Russian Empire had been especially preoccupied with the children, although there are some signs, interpreted by Katriona Kelly as proofs of the interest towards them, mainly in what regards education (the building of schools). In any case, before the 20th century, no systematic research concerning childhood in Russia exists – and the same is true also for Romania and other states from Eastern Europe.

Why do children come to the communists' attention? Peter Stearns identifies two causes: 1. The extremely high infant mortality, combined with the general mortality during the war, which draws the authorities' attention. In 1914, infant mortality was situated around 30%; in 1921 it had reached 50% (some authors speak about a 90% mortality in the case of newborns/newborn babies). 2. The international legitimisation of the regime. Communists took over a series of elements from the western model of childhood and adapted them to the local specificities and conditions, restructuring this model. Summarising, this reorientation towards childhood has caused a resetting of the relations between family and state in a relatively short period of time and in favour of the state, which tried to substitute itself for the parents using any methods possible.

Childhood meant, primarily, schooling – which greatly reduced the time potentially allocated to the household chores fulfilled by children (children are taken from the fields and brought to school) – and, secondly, organisation, on the principles of socialisation and of building the character within children's organisations. The Soviet model of children's organisations pushes the Occidental model of the *Boy Scouts* or the fascist model of the HJ towards its absolute limits, almost all children aged between 9 and 14 being included in the Pioneer Organisation (*Vsesoyuznaya Pionerskaya Organizatsia Imeni Vladimira Ilicha Lenina*)

that offered them dancing classes, physical training, summer camps and indoctrination – often through memorisation! On the other hand, children had to participate, in accordance with their own abilities, in the collective work efforts in the fields, factories and plants, in helping the veterans, etc. Those who reached the age of 14 entered the Komsomol (*Kommunisticeski Soiuz Molodioji*) – where the actual indoctrination began.

The Pioneers and the Country’s Hawks (in Romanian: *Șoimii Patriei*)². The Romanian communist vision of children’s organisations. The role of the children in building “the new man”

There is no doubt that the birth of children’s organisations of a communist nature was inspired by the Soviet experience and model, taken over and successfully applied in the post-war years in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. The first meetings of the communists concerning the problem of children postulate precisely this lack of organisation in the case of a population category which, in theory, could serve the Party’s goals in the best possible manner, in just a few years’ time.

Between 1949 and 1989 two children’s organisations have functioned in Romania, namely the Pioneers – from 1949 – and the Country’s Hawks, beginning with 1977. The Hawks submitted themselves to the Pioneers, which were, at their turn, subordinated to the UCY³, the latter being responsible to the Central Committee (CC) of the RCP.

The intention of the Party’s ideologists – as well as that of the RCP’s leaders – was to expand the propaganda in order to include all the societal levels, regardless of age. As in the Soviet case – an excellent model of “good practices” – the communists bet the preparation of the stocks of future activists on children and young people. The conditions were relatively similar to those from the USSR: an agrarian, poorly educated and deeply religious (and superstitious) society, which still perceived the child as a working hand in the household and afterwards a wage-earner! Schools were built and compulsory mass education became the rule. Women

² Another possible translation for this phrase is „Motherland’s Hawks”.

³ The Union of Communist Youth (UCY) from Romania was established/founded in March 1922, when the General Conference of the Socialist Youth met in Bucharest, while organising the Communist Youth International – KIM. Between 1924 and 1936, the UCY acted in illegality and in 1936 dissolved itself. During the period of the Antonescu regime, the UCY was re-established, but hardly survived, without the youth’s support. After 1944, however, under the protection of the Red Army and of a strong Communist Party, the UCY was reactivated.

received/were granted access to and entered massively on the working market (inappropriately called a “market”) and to factories and plants, respectively, and the state built nurseries and kindergartens motivated not so much by care for the little ones, but in order to permit and facilitate the mothers’ access to work. Naturally, school became the recruitment basis for the future communist youth. School as an institution was the first link in the training system of staff needed to build socialism. Youth needed to be educated in the spirit of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism. In 1918, Soviet communists decided that "we must make the younger generation a generation of Communists. We have to transform children into true communists. We must learn to influence significantly the family. We have to take control and, to say clearly, nationalize them. Since the first days they [the children] will be under the influence of Communist kindergartens and schools” (Heller, 1985, p. 180).

The first successful official attempts regarding the children’s organisation concretised in 1949. In the project for the Pioneer Organisation of the Romanian People’s Republic (RPR; in Romanian: *Republica Populară Română*) it was noted that organising the children according to the model of the Pioneers from the USSR was the dream of the communists, who “love the children like no one else”! (File 142/1948). In 1948, approximately 50,000 children had already departed/left for the summer camps organised by the Party; the primary base was, therefore, ensured! Through a resolution from December 1948, the CC of the Romanian Workers’ Party (RWP; in Romanian: *Partidul Muncitoresc Român* – PMR) sets for the Union of Working Youth (UWY; in Romanian: *Uniunea Tineretului Muncitoresc* – UTM) the task of creating and being in charge of Pioneer organisations comprising children aged between 9 and 14. The organisations were to include only the best children, in order to serve as a model and example for all the others, but all the children were to participate in the activities organised by the Pioneers, of course, considering that every child would become so inspired by the ideals of the Pioneering spirit that they would do all that was necessary in order to be admitted to the organisations. Interestingly, those who set this task guessed that mere political training would not be sufficient to attract children and that it would be necessary to coopt some pedagogues who would propose activities that were adequate for the children’s level of understanding and for their age preoccupations. This was one of the assumptions that laid at the foundation of the creation of the children’s circles and of the Children’s National Palace (in Romanian: *Palatul Național al*

Copiilor). According to the organisation project, the main purpose of the Pioneer Organisations was that of becoming “the most reliable help to the popular school in the formation of a young generation, well prepared from a political, professional and physical point of view, in the formation of a young citizen who is dignified/respectable and devoted to the RPR, an enthusiastic builder of socialism, a faithful militant for Lenin’s and Stalin’s cause...” (File 142/1948, p. 4).

A few guiding ideas/principles were laid at the basis of the organisation:

1. Love for the motherland – it implied knowledge of the historical past, the cultivation of popular music, dances and literature, knowledge of the country’s riches and, above all, “understanding the superiority of our country over the countries in which children lead a miserable life”.
2. Love for and devotion to the Party;
3. Love for the USSR – “the country in which the happiest children in the world live”;
4. Respect and appreciation for the other peoples;
5. Love for learning – children’s principal duty towards their motherland and their parents;
6. Love for nature;
7. Forming/building the character of the Pioneer, of the “future new man” – love for work, the sentiment of workers’ justice, courage and abnegation in the fight for socialism’s and communism’s just cause, honesty and modesty, collective spirit, self-critical sense, sincerity, morality!

According to the organisation project, the Pioneers must be handled with care, politics and indoctrination must be carried out within the capabilities of their young minds, without scaring them and driving them away! The formalistic attitude that would have prematurely aged children had to be eliminated. All advice was taken from the method of the Russian pedagogue Kalinin. Beyond propaganda, the project seriously discussed the problem of these children’s education: they should be accustomed to read – the suggested reading materials were, however, carefully selected by the Party! –, imbued with an artistic and critical spirit, oriented towards sporting activities, in order to develop healthily and harmoniously. At the same time, the Pioneer should

hike and go on excursions, be altruistic, work and evolve within a social group, exercising his or her qualities as a member of the team.

The Pioneer Organisation

The smallest formation was constituted by the group, including 8-10 Pioneers from the same class. More groups formed a detachment and all the detachments of a school composed a unit. “Democratically” – by direct election – the group chose its leader the detachment elected a management/a board comprising 3-4 members, led by a detachment commander and the unit was headed by a group formed of 7-9 members, coordinated by a commander chosen in a plenary session (File 167/1950, leaf 10). Those in charge at the level of the county appointed a superior instructor, who was responsible for the entire activity that took place in a school unit.

Similarly to any organisation of a socialist type, the Pioneer Organisation’s activity as well unfolded on the basis of a working plan, which respected the school board’s requests and did not impinge upon syllabus/curriculum. A task was set for each individual (each Pioneer) and each individual was responsible before the group for its completion – the fulfilment plan was checked weekly, the detachments analysed the results once every two weeks and the unit reported monthly the degree to which the tasks were accomplished. As a result, an extremely laborious/complicated scheme that was surely going to affect schoolwork, regardless of how much it was insisted upon the contrary in the organisation regulation.

Access to the Pioneer Organisation

As shown in the project for its establishment, the Pioneer Organisation could comprise children aged between 9 and 14, who proved that they had good results in school (they were the best in their class) and that they had an exemplary behaviour within the school and outside of it. Enrolment was voluntary and depended upon a request submitted by the student in question, a request that had to include, apart from the date of birth and the current address, information about the parents and their social status. Obviously, access to the organisation was made more difficult and even prevented for children who came from families with “unhealthy origins” – in the same manner in which access to higher levels of education was hindered for the same categories. As a general rule, if the request was approved (after a serious analysis at the level of the school), the future Pioneer received the red tie and the Pioneer’s insignia in a public ceremony, organised in places and at dates with a special meaning for the workers’ movement or

for the country's glorious past, uncontested by the communists. The ceremonial was extremely pompous and took place in the presence of the county Party leaders, of the army's representatives, of various councils and committees, of the representatives of the school inspectorates, of the people with the best results in production, of the parents and of the other students. Similarly to all the young people enrolled in the organisations that were mentioned at the beginning of this study, young Pioneers also promised⁴, at the solemn moment of receiving the red tie, to become noteworthy citizens of the motherland/country through hard work and education. The Pioneers' slogan was: "Learn and fight for the working class!", an exhortation expressed by the highest-ranking person who attended the ceremony. And the answer that the Pioneers gave was: "I will fight, I will learn"! At 14 years of age, the Pioneers could join the UWY.

Just as their parents – toilers for the cause of the country – the Pioneers could be rewarded for the attainment of the desired results, criticised and exposed in the wall gazette if they failed to fulfil them and sanctions could be imposed upon them for irregularities. The most drastic disciplinary sanctions were enforced upon children who, through their behaviour, brought disgrace on the Pioneer's prestige. They could even be excluded from the organisation, an action that had very serious consequences for the one who aspired to become a university student – he or she could hardly ever enrol at a faculty, without undergoing the rehabilitation process!

What was expected, concretely, from the Pioneers? Obviously, by following the example coming from the East, from the USSR, the Pioneers, raised in the spirit of the class ideology of the proletariat, were to become the future generations of "energetic and cultivated citizens of socialism, political leaders, administrative cadres, valuable technicians, avant-garde members of the people, capable of sacrifice and heroism" (File 1949, leaf 10). In short, the Pioneer was the developing prototype of the "new man" – the country's future, without any connections with religion, superstition and ignorance, inclined towards work and sacrifice, situated at a considerable distance from the so-called "bourgeois" traditions and values. Simona Preda shows that the absolute model was Pioneer 001, Pave Morozov, at least until around 1951, the year after which the Romanian communist leaders tried to put some distance between themselves and

⁴ The commitment of the Pioneer: "I, a young Pioneer of the RPR, before the Romanian Working Party, pledge the commitment to protect the conquests of the working class, and to fight for socialism's and communism's victory in our country. I make the commitment to learn and to work so that I will be a noteworthy citizen of our popular republic".

Moscow and its model (Preda, 2012). The regulations, the manner in which the candidates were received into the organisation, the system of rewards and punishments, the uniform, the ranks, facings and other various insignia actually show that the organisation was inspired by a military model and, given the fervour with which the propaganda acted, it is not surprising that children were really eager to become Pioneers. “Organised as an army at a smaller scale, easy to manoeuvre and instruct, the mass of Pioneers who had barely entered the system at the tenderest ages had to quickly take the step forwards towards the statute of a base of cadres for the Republic” (Preda 2012, 20).

The inventory of terms from the propagandistic literature provides the image of a model youngster, guided by courage, patriotism, honour, loyalty. In the 1980 regulation, hence at 30 years from its establishment, certain amendments are introduced both in defining the organisation’s purposes and in distributing the Pioneers’ obligations according to their age. Thus, the Pioneer Organisation is a “mass revolutionary organisation of the children”, which contributes to the communist education and formation of the young generation, alongside schooling and the family. “The Pioneer Organisation helps the Pioneers get acquainted with and understand the Romanian Communist Party’s politics, it mobilises them to participate, according to their abilities, to its fulfilment. The Pioneer Organisation educates pupils in the spirit of the socialist internationalism, of friendship with children from the socialist countries, from the entire world, under the sign of peace and understanding amongst peoples. It develops the sentiment of solidarity with the peoples’ fight for freedom and national independence, for social progress”. The little Pioneer (classes II-IV) loves his country and gets prepared to serve it with devotion; the big Pioneer (classes V-VIII) loves his motherland ardently, placing the country’s interests above everything else; in everything he does he proves interest and passion and, above all else, his actions demonstrate his commitment towards the organisation, the party and the motherland (The Statute of the Pioneer Organisation, 1980).

The Country’s Hawks

In 1976 a conclusion was reached, namely that even preschool children must be comprised in the system of patriotic education and formation and the RCP’s members of note were charged with elaborating a regulation for the creation of an organisation for preschool and first grade children, the future Hawks of the Country. By comparatively analysing the two regulations – of

the Pioneers and of the Hawks – one cannot notice significant differences of vision regarding the role of those organisations and of the methods that they suggested in order to reach their goals.

It appears that the idea of constituting the Country's Hawks had belonged to Nicolae Ceaușescu, who had as a rationale the desire to extend the patriotic and political educational activity amongst small children and those who had reached the age of 4 as well, regardless of whether they went to kindergarten or not (Report/2.09.1976). From the stenograph of a meeting from 1976, one can see that the motivation/motive that laid at the foundation of including children beginning with the age of 4 was not related to any pedagogical or logical reason, but to one that was merely circumstantial: Leonte Răutu, one of the prominent leaders of the Party at that time, proposed that children of 5 years of age be regimented, explaining that there is a big difference between a child of 4 and one of 5. Ceaușescu replied that, as they were being taken care of and were engaged in activities within nurseries, the regimentation beginning with the age of 4 remained in effect (File 89/1976, Protocol no. 10 of the meeting of the CC's Secretariat). Probably, if nurseries and kindergartens had included children of smaller ages, the official indoctrination would have begun much earlier.

In general lines, what was sought was the “implantation of the love for the motherland/country, the Party and the people, the children's patriotic, revolutionary, socialist education, in the spirit of work, of care for the common property, of diligence, honesty, courage, mutual aid and of activities within the collective”, traits which, as can be seen, were suited both to the working class, comprising adults, and to those who had just been weaned, included or not in a form of socialist organisation. Ironically, it was mentioned that these noble sentiments had to be nurtured/cultivated through methods appropriate to the age, although learning by memorisation was not excluded! Likewise, almost all the objectives that the new organisation set for itself were copied from the objectives of the sister organisation – the Pioneers – including the participation in accordance with “one's own abilities” in work done for the use of the community and the acquirement of the patriotic ideals.

As working methods, a series of means were envisaged: meetings with militants of the Party, visits to the plants, factories, agricultural units, excursions, learning patriotic songs and poems, fun and recreational games and sports activities. The identikit of the Hawk, as it was “sketched out” by the Party: a faithful/devoted son of the people and the Party, loves work and

learning, respects and loves his or her parents, educators and teachers, is honest, just, courageous, well-behaved, tidy and presentable! Of course, all the Hawks were good friends and helped each other out, participating with joy at the activities of the group or class in which they were included. And above all else, the Hawks were always cheerful and strove to do a good deed every day! (Project of regulation “The Country’s Hawks”, 1976).

The Pioneer Organisation had the task of harmonising the activity of the young Hawks and the Council for the coordination of the Pioneers’ activities stipulated the creation of a commission for guiding the activity of the newer organisation. In the document from 1976 it was shown that, “according to the proponents’ knowledge”, no similar organisations exist in the world, for children so small! Nevertheless, our research shows that a corresponding institution – the *Chavdarcheta* – was functioning in Bulgaria at the time.

In the report forwarded by the Pioneer Organisation in 1977 it was noted that the members of the almost 3,000 commissions constituted in order to support the organisation and the activity of the Hawks warmly thanked comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu for his constant preoccupation with the patriotic, revolutionary education of the motherland’s youngsters, from the earliest ages (Report, 5 June 1977). As the stenograph of the meeting of 5 June 1977 shows, a series of improvements that were to be brought in the regulation of the Country’s Hawks were discussed. Nicolae Ceaușescu appeared disturbed by the proposed suggestions, their vast majority concerning form and phrasing. In the proponents’ opinion, these alterations cleared the organisation’s significance and purposes, but according to the leader they threatened the latter’s existence: “you propose that instead of they are faithful sons of the people and the Party we substitute with they are preparing themselves for becoming faithful sons...”. He received the reply that it was assumed that these children were in the midst of a process of formation, of education and Ceaușescu asked: “What do you understand by a process of formation? When they were born, were they not born as sons of the country/motherland? There is a wrong conception in your case. Are they not sons of the people? Is there a need for a certain process of preparation in order to become sons of the people? Then, whose sons are they?!”. (Stenograph, 1977). Consequently, the leader’s perception of these children’s affiliation is clear/obvious!!! They belong to the state, to the people, and far less to their parents.

Conclusions

The regimentation of children from very small ages in the system of organisations conceived by the RCP – the Country’s Hawks, the Pioneers, the UCY – practically resolved/solved the problem of the stock of Party cadres. These organisations’ programmes and regulations – especially those of the Pioneers – were thus formulated so that children would want to be admitted, to feel the Pioneering spirit and to participate in the work of creating the “new man” and in the flourishing of the multilaterally developed society as rewards for their sustained activity, for their patriotism and love for the country and the leader. Simona Preda demonstrates that the propagandistic literature spread the idea that solely the mere belonging to the Pioneer Organisation was a reason of pride for the young pupil.

The child represented a privileged figure in the communist mythology, as he symbolised the future, “*that generation who will take over, from Stalin’s hands, the flag that, once, Lenin had triumphantly raised*” (Cioroianu 1995, 95). Beginning with very early ages, children were included in various forms of social-political organisation and they were psychologically affected by a series of slogans. When speaking about pupils, the expression of the “new man” was eminently the Pioneer. To be a proud wearer of the red tie was a synonym for being a part of the ranks of the youngest communists, adorers of the Party’s word. Later on, in the ‘70s, the Country’s Hawks were created alongside the Pioneer Organisation, at Ceaușescu’s express request, and it comprised the category of the smaller, preschool children, who were also going to contribute to the *construction of the multilaterally developed socialist society*. The regimentation of the youth was a primary objective of the moulding of the “new man”, as the children and the young people represented the future of the country, the reserves amongst which the new activists were going to be recruited. “*For a young revolutionary, the interests of the socialist society become personal goals, from the fulfilment of which he will never stray on his way. Dignified, sincere, disciplined, courageous, he respects truth and honesty, fulfilling, through everything he does, through his entire manner of living and conduct, the Party’s word*” (Cutezătorii, 1984).

Sources:

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