

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE COLLECTIVISATION OF AGRICULTURE ON RURAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT:

THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN ROMANIA DID NOT APPEAR SUDDENLY, BUT THROUGH AN EVENTFUL EVOLUTION OF HISTORY. THE END OF ROMANIAN DEMOCRACY IN AN UNFAVORABLE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT HASTENED THE SEIZURE OF POWER BY A POLITICAL PARTY THAT UNTIL THEN HAD NO TRACTION AMONG THE MASSES. THE COMMUNIST PARTY MADE THE ASSAULT ON POWER IN THE PERIOD 1945-1947. THE SOVIETIZATION OF THE COUNTRY WAS ACHIEVED IN ALL SECTIONS OF SOCIETY THROUGH THE MOST VIOLENT MEANS, AND FOR HALF A CENTURY, FORCEFUL MEASURES WERE TAKEN, THE COUNTRY'S EVOLUTION BEING DIVERTED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TRAJECTORY.

REGARDING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THIS PERIOD, IT CAN BE SAID THAT IT EXPERIENCED A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE AFTER 1948, CHANGES THAT HAPPENED IN PARALLEL WITH THE PROCESS OF COLLECTIVIZATION, WHICH AFFECTED THE ENTIRE RURAL POPULATION OF ROMANIA.

THIS PAPER AIMS TO STUDY RURAL EDUCATION AND THE CONSEQUENCES THAT COLLECTIVIZATION HAD ON EDUCATION, FROM THE BEGINNING OF SOVIETIZATION TO THE END OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN ROMANIA.

KEYWORDS: EDUCATION, COLLECTIVIZATION, MODERNIZATION, CULTURAL REVOLUTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The education system after 1948 experienced a fundamental change. The creation of the "new man" was achieved by abandoning the traditions of education: teachers attached to old values were excluded, teachers with questionable training were hired, school programs were rewritten, and students entered schools based on a selection by the social status of the parents and the dedication to the new ideology. In the same direction with the changes in education, collectivization process affected the entire rural population of Romania, which in 1948 was 12 million inhabitants out of a total of 16 million people. The families of wealthy peasants had to be destroyed and "reeducated".

According to specialized literature, the communist experiment in the communist educational system (Mărcău, F.C., 2020) experienced three stages: sovietization and the cultural revolution (1948 - 1962), de-sovietization and the formal return to the traditions of Romanian education (1962 - 1978), the return to the cultural revolution and excessive ideologization (1978- 1989) (Gheorghe 2019: p. 207). The educational reform of 1948 unstructured Romanian education by promoting the Soviet model and proposing a series of coercive measures on the educational system in Romania. After 1968, there was a relative return to the tradition of Romanian education, and starting from 1978, the educational system

was established in order to train qualified personnel for the centralized economy. The Romanian education system has become a propaganda tool, being the main component of the new socialist culture. In addition, the process of collectivization of agriculture was one of the most barbaric and aggressive actions ever undertaken on Romanian society, with lasting effects, which led to the diversion of agriculture from its normal course (Roman: p. 396). It had profound consequences on the inner structure of the Romanian peasant.

The main hypotheses of this paper on rural education was derived from the following statements: the communist regime used the rural school as an instrument of the "cultural revolution", the school was ideologized and subject to party control, the educational level increased during the communist period.

The present paper is structured in 4 parts: general aspects of agricultural collectivization, the sovietization of rural education in 1948 - 1962, education in the rural environment from sovietization to a relative return to the traditions of Romanian education (1962 - 1978), the "cultural revolution" and ideologies excessive in rural schools during 1978 – 1989 (Mărcău F.C., 2011).

2. GENERAL ASPECTS REGARDING COLLECTIVIZATION

The first decade of the socialist period involved the realization of extensive structural processes, which would radically change the profile of Romanian society. The nationalization of the main means of production, carried out by Law 119 of June 11, 1948, represented the process by which the Romanian state passed from a capitalist economy to a centralized economy. This process was followed by collectivization, whereby most of the agricultural land passed from the ownership of the people to the ownership of the state. At the same time, the processes of industrialization and urbanization were started, which would reconfigure the demographic and economic structure of the country in a few decades. (Mihalache, Croitoru 2011: p. 13).

The process of collectivization affected the entire rural population of Romania, which in 1948 actually represented the overwhelming majority of the country's population, approximately 12,000,000 inhabitants out of a total of 16,000,000. (Tismaneanu 2006: p. 424).

Through its intensity, duration and implications, through the extremely violent repression measures used by the regime, which involved numerous state institutions, "the process of collectivization actually appears as a real war against the peasantry". (Tismaneanu 2006: p. 424). This war was based on the principle of class struggle, through which the party-state tried to break the solidarity of the peasantry, to fundamentally transform the social structure of the rural world and subordinate it to its social engineering plans.

The elimination of private property was a direct form of exercising control over the individual. The propagandists had a role in "clarifying" the peasants about the necessity of collectivization. Their action supported by the press and radio was from the beginning doomed to failure due to the discrepancy between propaganda and reality. In the 1950s, the adherence to the communist transformation projects of society mattered less than unconditional submission, obtained through terror.

The Communist Party suggested various economic, ideological and political arguments in favor of collectivization.

- from an economical point of view, the need for collectivization was based on the idea that peasant property was unprofitable and could not be accommodated to the requirements of the modern economy, thus being condemned to disappear by the progress of technology.

- from an ideological and political point of view, the communists believed that only an agriculture carried out on large areas of exploitation, owned by the state, could give results

intended to support the process of urbanization and socialist industrialization (Tismaneanu 2006: p. 425).

The social reorganization of the rural world through the expropriation and systematic exploitation of the peasantry was thus considered a fundamental condition for the implementation of the communist project of forced industrialization of Romania.

3. SOVIETIZATION OF RURAL EDUCATION IN THE PERIOD 1948-1962

From the organization and operation of the educational system's point of view, the period 1948-1961 began with a reform, legislated by Decree no. 175 of the Presidium of the Great National Assembly of August 3, 1948. Thus, the sovietization of Romanian education began with the adoption of Decree no. 175 for the reform of education which aimed, among other things, to "remove book ignorance, educate the youth in the spirit of popular democracy and train training of middle and high-level specialists, on a scientific basis, that correspond to the needs of the consolidation of popular democracy and the establishment of the socialist society" (Bunescu 2004: p. 342). The school represented, in the vision of the new leaders, the first link in the system of training the cadres necessary for the construction of socialism (Tismaneanu 2006: p. 473).

The education reform of 1948 had as its main objective the politicization of the educational system in Romania, the elimination of the existing teaching staff and the establishment of categories of teaching staff who would apply the party's policy. Practically, during this period the destructuring of the identity of Romanian education was achieved, the educational system in Romania being compatible with the Soviet education system, both from an institutional-organizational perspective and from the perspective of contents (Gorun 2015: p. 42).

The sovietization of rural education took place in parallel with the collectivization of the Romanian village, knowing various forms of manifestation, such as: the introduction of the Russian language, the class struggle in schools, cultural work, ideologies and propaganda and the introduction of Soviet pedagogical methods (Gheorghe 2019: p. 214). Learning the Russian language in Romanian schools had an ideological and propagandistic purpose, the rural environment facing a lack of specialized teachers. The politicization of education was realized both by the introduction of some social science subjects, in the spirit of the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist theory, and by the elimination of other subjects considered bourgeois such as sociology and psychology.

The communist regime took the class struggle to schools through other methods as well, such as purging teachers on political grounds. The policy promoted by the communists within the education system aimed at establishing a teaching body according to political and social criteria. Therefore, high school teachers were removed from education, and some of them were transferred to the countryside, on the grounds that they "constitute hostile elements and do not acquire Soviet pedagogical methods (Gheorghe 2019: p. 215).

Another goal of the reform was "the day-to-day cultivation of a communist attitude towards work, towards social, socialist property" (Tismaneanu 2006: p. 476). Like workers, intellectuals were required to participate in increasing labor productivity: both teachers and educators had to be brought to the status of proletarians - "intellectual proletarians"(Tismaneanu 2006: p. 476). In this context, ideology and propaganda were omnipresent in rural schools, during which the teachers and teachers of the communist era were reduced to the status of mere proletarians.

The teachers of communist Romania had a well-defined mission by the communist party, that of indoctrinating the students. A form of indoctrination of the students was that of their involvement in pioneer organizations. Pioneer organizations existed in all rural schools,

being structured in detachments that had a drum, trumpet, unity and detachment flag. Their motto is as generous as it is harmful in terms of indoctrinating whole generations of young people "for the cause of the party - forward!" (Gheorghe 2019: p. 217).

Cultural work and instructive-educational activity has been a way of political propaganda and ideologization since the beginning of the sovietization of rural education and the collectivization of the Romanian village. The task of so-called cultural work was handed over to teachers and professors. For an extra half-time, they were used as directors of cultural hostels or cultural activists (Gheorghe 2019: p. 217).

The campaign to combat illiteracy was an important part of the cultural revolution. In the view of the communist officials, illiteracy constituted a huge obstacle in the way of attracting working people to the leadership of the country and to the active construction of communism. To be able to accept the word party, the peasants first had to learn to read. Thus, numerous teachers were sent to the villages in the period 1948-1953 in order to carry out the literacy campaign imposed by the party in power. Combating illiteracy was achieved by organizing special courses of 1-2 years, equivalent to primary classes, for people aged 14 and 55 (Gheorghe 2019: p. 217).

The teachers from village also received from the party the mission of convincing the peasants in the collectivization process. In most cases, these teachers were considered by the Popular Councils as mere propaganda tools. The "improvement" courses that teachers were required to attend were, in fact, indoctrination courses (Tismaneanu 2006: p. 479).

Agro-zoo technical courses represent another direction of action of the communist regime for the sovietization and collectivization of the Romanian village, by using schools as a propaganda tool (Gheorghe 2019: p. 219). Agro-zoo technical education proves the connection between the rural school and the collectivization process of agriculture. The agro-zoo technical courses were considered as the main factor in the training of the collectivist peasants, they expounded lessons on the increase of agricultural production and the organization of work in the Collective Farms.

The collectivization of agriculture upset the rural world and affected it in every way. In the written press, you can find shocking testimonies of a son of a peasant, who caught collectivization in the prime of his life, unable to follow the desired professional path: "My path in life was not upward! I did not climb in my life! I went down, from the state of a peasant - that is, a householder - and with a sense of property, to the state of a comrade, without property and without being able to enjoy especially the profession that I ardently wanted, namely - veterinarian! Collectivization canceled me, alienated me, changed my psychology. It was a great drama for my parents, for me, for my brothers, and at the same time, a great achievement, for the poverty of the village and for all those who played the game of the communist system". (<https://gorjeanul.ro/colectivizarea-cu-pistolul-pe-masa-si-n-albeni-1961-1962/>).

4. EDUCATION IN THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT FROM SOVIETIZATION TO A RELATIVE RETURN TO THE TRADITIONS OF ROMANIAN EDUCATION (1962-1978)

In the context of the consolidation of the command economy and the entry of the respective economic system into the progressive phase of its evolution, a series of normative documents were initiated that had a positive effect on the progress of the education system. Thus, it was possible to partially return to some valuable traditions of the Romanian educational system from the interwar period, as well as an opening to international experiences regarding the modernization and widening of access to education and professional training for the various categories of the active and pre-active population. (Pavelescu 2016: p. 232).

Law no. 11 on education adopted on May 13, 1968, stipulates that education is organized cyclically: preschool, compulsory education of 10 classes, professional and technical education, higher and postgraduate education (Law no. 11 of May 13, 1968). This law of education is marked by the political factor, education having as its purpose "the acquisition, by the citizens, of the general culture and the knowledge necessary for the exercise of professions useful to society, the formation of their materialist-dialectical conception (Law no. 11 of May 13, 1968).

The 1968 law establishes vocational education and technical education to train an increased number of workers, foremen and technicians capable of economic and socio-cultural activities. Also, the infrastructure of rural schools is put under the coordination of the People's Councils and local party organizations, and the status of teaching staff remains politicized, teachers and teachers being considered simple proletarians of the communist regime.

The status of teaching staff remains highly politicized, teachers and teachers being considered mere proletarians of the communist system. The indoctrination of students from village schools also continued, even if there was talk of a relative relaxation and a return to the traditions of Romanian education. After 1964, this indoctrination acquired a nationalist coloration, in agreement with Nicolae Ceausescu's line of national communism.

Between 1962-1978, even in the context of Nicolae Ceausescu's coming to power and the new education law adopted in 1968, the communist experiment continued in rural schools. Thus, the schools remained under the coordination of the administration/popular councils, the ideologization and political propaganda continued and the process of indoctrination of the students maintained its pace.

5. THE "CULTURAL REVOLUTION" AND EXCESSIVE IDEOLOGIZATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS DURING 1978-1989

Educational law no. 28 of 1978 resumed in a much firmer form the conceptions of the communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu regarding education, being characterized by an accentuated politicization of the school's mission, that of "multilateral preparation of the cadres necessary for all fields of activity, in close connection with the requirements of the production of material and spiritual goods, the training and education of the new man, the continuous improvement of the professional, scientific and technical training of working people (Educational law no. 28 of December 21, 1978). This normative act introduced the principle of combining education with production. Therefore, on the basis of this law, social and human subjects were removed from schools, high schools and faculties being placed under the tutelage of factories, receiving production plans.

Political and administrative decision-makers have turned pupils, students and teachers into the main workforce in construction and agriculture. Also during this period, "youth construction sites", patriotic work camps were opened and mass participation in "Daciada" and "Cântarea României" were made essential conditions for the appreciation of teachers, units and educational institutions (Gorun A., Gorun H.T. 2014, p. 180).

In the period 1978-1989, the school infrastructure underwent modernization, even if the educational system was not a priority for the communist regime, most of the resources being directed to economic development. For the communists, the school was only used as a propaganda tool and to train professionally qualified cadres for the socialist economy. The share of education expenses in the gross domestic product was not at all satisfactory, Romania allocating at that time only 2.1% of G.D.P. For this sector of activity (Gheorghe 2019, p. 226).

As a field of activity placed at the service of the regime, the educational system operates and is organized according to the imperatives formulated by the party documents. The mission

of the school is to form the young generation in the spirit of dialectical and historical materialism, in this framework the indoctrination of students continues in rural schools.

The collapse of the communist regime in the 1980's was keenly felt in the countryside. Most of the population had to endure and face repeated and long series of shortages in terms of food supply, consumer goods and access to various services.

6. CONCLUSION

During the communist regime, rural schools were used as nurseries for cadres for the construction of socialism, students being politically indoctrinated and trained as true communists. The communist state saw the school as the ideal tool for propaganda and ideologization of the Romanian village (Mărcău F. C., 2020). Otherwise, it can be said that the communist regime destroyed the entire traditional Romanian society. But during this period there were also positive aspects that must be highlighted. At least in theory, illiteracy disappeared, the exact sciences less dangerous than the social sciences could be studied, the number of students increased and young people from poor social categories had access to books. Of course, the question arises whether the number can justify the quality and whether literacy is to be valued when one can only read the word of the party.

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