

# FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR PRESS AND PRINTING CENSORS

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## FORME DE PERFECTIONARE ALE CENZORILOR DIRECȚIEI GENERALE A PRESEI ȘI TIPĂRITURILOR

**ABSTRACT:** *The ideological work and the defence of the purity of the communist Party's political line were the most representative areas of activity for DGPT. Its mission was to notice in the press "the distortions with discernment", those of the political line of the party, the data and restrictive advertising objectives, as well as those being state secrets. In this work "full of responsibility" the DGPT censor had to be promptly and well-informed man on the general internal and external political line of the Party and of the State, on their ideological activity, their cultural and artistic life etc. Daily information with everything that was new in these sectors, knowledge of the Party's policy, of Marxist-Leninist theory, thoroughness of the general knowledge, could be achieved only through different ways of professional development, systematic and continuous study.*

**KEYWORDS:** *copyright, censors, commissioners, improvement, qualification.*

**REZUMAT:** *Munca ideologică și apărarea purității liniei politice a partidului comunist au fost cele mai reprezentative domenii în cadrul cărora DGPT își exercita activitatea. Misiunea ei era de a sesiza „cu discernământ denaturările” în presă a liniei politice a partidului, datele și obiectivele restrictive publicității, precum și cele care constituiau secrete de stat. În această muncă „plină de răspundere”, împuternicitul DGPT trebuia să fie omul informat operativ și detaliat asupra liniei politice generale interne și externe a partidului și statului, activității ideologice, vieții cultural-artistice etc. Informarea la zi cu tot ceea ce era nou în aceste sectoare, cunoașterea politicii partidului, a teoriei marxist-leniniste, aprofundarea cunoștințelor de cultură generală, nu se putea realiza decât prin diverse modalități de perfecționare profesională, prin studiu sistematic și continuu.*

**CUVINTE-CHEIE:** *cenzură, cenzori, împuterniciți, perfecționare, calificare.*

Directorate-General for Press and Printing (DGPP) – the censorship body was set up in 1949 to control the information system during the Romanian communist years. In order to carry out its task, it had to be present in every locality where publications appeared. Provincial censors, named DGPP representatives, made possible this omnipresence.

To improve the quality of censor's work, DGPP was always concerned by the coordination and supervision of their professional development. In this regard, was set up the Training-Control Service<sup>1</sup>, which, as the title shows us, was meant to train and control the activity of the delegates through field trainers, to organize regular conferences, exchanges of experience between teams where trainings were carried in order to raise the professional, political and ideological level of the delegates. The transmission of circulars to the territorial structures was a means of operative information in various levels of their activity.

Since its first years, DGPP has been concerned with improving the qualification of specialists,

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<sup>1</sup> The structure is known by other names, also: Regional and District Service, Training and Control Service, Directorate for Committee Activity in Counties, Local Press Directorate. See: Laza 2014, p. 65–67.

creating all the necessary conditions for graduating various forms of state education or of further education. To increase the political and ideological level, but also to raise the vigilance and combativeness, all institution workers attended party education. After several years, when DGPP employees were considered to have reached an adequate political and professional level or where there was some stability in work and the censors had gradual specializations, there was a reorganization of the work carried out consisting in moving from the principle of work organization according to the frequency of the materials to that of work organization by content. This measure has fully proved its validity (according to the expectations of DGPP – n.n.) permitting its workers a more solid specialization, an increase of the professional qualification, a work quality on a higher level and the strengthening of the sense of responsibility of each<sup>2</sup>.

For the activities carried by censors, **the studies** were very important. Thus, those with higher education were preferred, graduates (10 of 75, in 1953; 19 of 87, in 1954; 17 of 65, in 1955) or even students (2 in 1953 and in 1955, 4 in 1954). But, most of them only graduated high school (14 in 1953, 17 in 1954, 13 in 1955), middle school (29 in 1953, 28 in 1954, 20 in 1955) or even primary school (20 in 1953, 19 in 1954, 13 in 1955)<sup>3</sup>.

The use of multiple training forms in communist education of DGPP workers contributed to the hiring of representatives in various circles of higher education of the party, according to the possibilities of each and the needs of the work and to the graduation by most of them of University evening classes, after having previously attended higher education courses of philosophy, political economy, etc., their political and ideological level being thus constantly increasing.

Good results were shown also in the finishing of state studies line, a statement justified by the following situation regarding the studies of representatives<sup>4</sup> on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1962: representative who graduated higher education institutions represented 43.11% of the total of 109 at that time (28 working full time, 13 working part time and 6 working ¼ of time), those who graduated middle school represented 23.85% (17 working full time, 2 working part time and 7 working ¼ of time), students at different faculties represented 3.6% (2 working full time, 1 working part time and 1 working ¼ of time), pupils in middle school 14.67% (7 working full time, 1 working part time and 8 working ¼ of time) and those graduating only primary school represented 14.67% (13 working full time and 3 working ¼ of time). 22 representatives finished their studies in parallel with their activity at DGPP: 14 of them finished higher education schools (7 working full time, 6 working part time and 1 working ¼ of time), and 8 representatives finished middle school (6 working full time and 2 working ¼ of time).

The approaches of the Training-Control Directorate (U 86) of August 1962 towards local party bodies<sup>5</sup> and the discussions with representatives concerned led to the enrollment of 11 censors in state education during 1962–1963, as follows: Rimniceanu Ștefan (Ploiești) – enrolled on the list of PMR Regional Committee for the Faculty of History; Hügel Ștefan (Brașov) – enrolled on the list of PMR Regional Committee for the middle school, IX-th grade; Adami Rudolf (Brașov) – enrolled on the list of PMR Regional Committee for the middle school, VIII-th grade; Ungureanu Teodor (Timișoara) – enrolled on the list of PMR Regional Committee for middle school equivalence<sup>6</sup>; Wendling Mihai (Timișoara) – enrolled on the list of PMR Regional Committee for the middle school, VIII-th grade;

<sup>2</sup> Corobca 2014, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> ANIC, Fund for the Press and Printing Committee, file 10/1952, tab 2–3, file 7/1951, tab 1.

<sup>4</sup> Training-Control Directorate prepared and kept strict records, annually updated, of DGPP representatives without complete studies, working full time or part time.

<sup>5</sup> They contacted the Regional and District Committees of PMR to obtain the enrollment of DGPP representatives at completion courses of state education for the party activists. The deadline to finish these operations was August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1962. Unfavorable situations up to this date were reported to the DGPP management in order for the management to intervene at the higher levels.

<sup>6</sup> Graduated the Party Upper School „Ștefan Gheorghiu”.

Beculaț Iosif (Arad) – enrolled on the list of PMR City Committee for the middle school, VIII-th grade; Cserni Rozalia (Arad) – enrolled on the list of PMR City Committee for the middle school, VIII-th grade; Roșca Maria (Reșița) – enrolled on the list of PMR City Committee for the Faculty of History; Moldovan Filofteia (Deva) – enrolled on the list of PMR Regional Committee for the Faculty of Philology<sup>7</sup>; Konyicska Ștefan (Deva) – enrolled on the list of PMR Regional Committee for the middle school<sup>8</sup>; Gostian Gheorghe (Hunedoara) – enrolled on the list of PMR City Committee for the Faculty of Philology or the Pedagogic Institute<sup>9</sup>.

The problem of study completion was regarded in different ways by the representatives: some of them treated it very seriously, others – on the contrary, paid no importance to it. Among the first category, we mention: Csorics Ștefan (Timișoara), Rîmniceanu Ștefan (Ploiești), both of them finishing the entire middle school courses with passing of the baccalaureate exam as DGPP workers, Mannheim Carol (Arad), Frenkel Magdalena (Turda), Pășteanu Victor (Alba Iulia), Popescu Ion (Drobeta-Turnu Severin) or Cerescu Mihai (Piatra-Neamț). Of those paying no importance, some of the representatives as those in Brașov started party education every year, but never finish it and others attended different forms of political education with no contribution to their training, or they were propagandists, always in the same circles, becoming specialized in a single issue as those in Oradea Team and another category launched in to many issues, for example, those in Târgu-Mureș were students at the Party University, evening classes or they were lecturers, etc., not having enough time to study or work.

DGPP Management insisted that every worker of the institution should have higher education degrees, not for the degree, but for the organized and systematic learning in order to gain useful knowledge. In this regard, DGPP elaborated a perspective plan which included the enrollment in the state, middle and higher education institutions of the representatives concerned, and the enrollment of others in the most effective forms of party education for increasing the political and ideological level.

Prior to the actual start of the censor activity, the persons proposed for the position of representative passed through a **qualification** process (nonexistent in the first 10 years of DGPP – n.n.), which originally consisted of an individual theoretical training conducted at the Instruction-Control Directorate under the guidance of a trainer of this direction, and later became more complex with a longer run, taking place in two stages.

For individual theoretical training, the new representative would first be initiated with regard to the main tasks and objectives of the institution<sup>10</sup> and then “firmly” thought of the importance of work and the preservation of its secret, as well as of the need for permanent political-ideological, professional and general knowledge training. In order to understand all aspects of the work, a series of documents were studied: DGPP instructions and military instruction brochures, all circulars with orders sent in the country by the Training-Control Directorate, the file with the interventions of representatives and notification of trainers, the circulars on theater issues. During the study, he had to prove, by way of example, that he understands and acknowledges the basic principles and the main problems of work (political-ideological and state or military secrets – n.n.). Besides, he would also study the attributions and the way of organizing the work in order to observe the working manner of the newspaper, printing house, radio station, house of culture, theater tours, visual excitement, museums, exhibitions, control of unauthorized trade of books<sup>11</sup>. At the end of the training he would receive the file of the locality for which he was

<sup>7</sup> Which he will attend because he failed some equivalence exams for the III-rd year at I.S.E., studies interrupted a few years after.

<sup>8</sup> Graduated the Party Upper School „Ștefan Gheorghiu”.

<sup>9</sup> ANIC, Fund for the Press and Printing Committee, file 33/1961–1962, tab 3.

<sup>10</sup> The tasks assigned to U 55 Directorate would also be mentioned (Training-Control Directorate).

<sup>11</sup> After studying the document on the working manner, he was subjected to an assessment consisting of detecting mistakes in newspapers and materials transmitted by the radio station.

recruited with the exact situation of that locality, followed by the introduction and the initiation of the representative in the practical work<sup>12</sup>. The following attended such individual theoretical qualifications: Datcu Ștefan – representative for Galați, between December 21<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 1961<sup>13</sup>, Pălăuceanu Petrache – representative for Focșani, between January 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 1962<sup>14</sup>, Kovacs Tiberiu – representative for Petroșani, between May 29<sup>th</sup> and June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1962<sup>15</sup> or Sion Georgeta – representative for Bacău, who finished training at the Center on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1965<sup>16</sup>.

Starting with 1968, there would be a new formula of “qualification improvement”, for a longer period, carried in two stages. The first, named basic qualification, was carried in Bucharest, within the Training-Control Directorate<sup>17</sup>, divided into teams of 7 or 8 representatives. During March and April months of 1968, two qualification courses were held: one during March 4<sup>th</sup> – April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1968 with 8 participants: Andrei Ion<sup>18</sup> (Vaslui), Zamfirescu Ion (Vaslui), Diaconu Nicolae (Slatina), Mănarcă Adrian (Bistrița), Rebendics Iosif (Miercurea Ciuc), Tărel Constantin (Târgu-Jiu), Tereneanu Romeo (Botoșani), Pascu Gheorghe (Târgu-Mureș<sup>19</sup>), and the second one during April 5<sup>th</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1968 with 7 participants: Berindei Petre (Zalău), Branea Elena (Bacău), Misonca Mihail (Botoșani), Păduroiu Gheorghe (Buzău), Pîrvulescu Gheorghe (Târgoviște), Stanciu Alexandru (Râmnicu-Vâlcea), Toma Ion (Pitești)<sup>20</sup>.

In the second stage of qualification, training of representatives was to be completed in localities for which they were recruited<sup>21</sup>. At the end of the qualification period at local level, the team leader was responsible for drawing up a report summarizing his conclusions as to whether the person concerned could work by himself. This material was sent to Bucharest and forwarded to the management of the Training-Control Directorate<sup>22</sup>. Representative of Slatina town – Diaconu Nicolae had an experience of this kind. In his case, the training lasted for two weeks, between April 15<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> 1968 under the direct guidance of the team leader in Pitești, Albu Radu and under the supervision of the representative of the Training-Control Directorate, Bendovski Gheorghe. Qualification improvement consisted of: a detailed discussion of the methodology specific to the reading and control activity in all sectors of the locality; parallel reading of newspapers and other local publications, materials of the radio station, typographic works, prints or materials from the local editorial production, followed by discussing all the observations and the way of solving and transmitting them to the editorship; initiation of periodic checks on typography, radio station, museums, exhibitions, etc.; discussing the provisions of the DGPP Booklet of Orders and the lists of ministries referring to objectives, data and figures regarding the counties of Argeș, Olt and

<sup>12</sup> The representative, accompanied by a trainer of Training-Control Directorate, went to the locality for which he was recruited and for several days worked with him.

<sup>13</sup> He began working independently on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1962.

<sup>14</sup> Initiation and introduction to practical work took place on January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. See: ANIC, Fund for the Press and Printing Committee, file 22/1962, tab 158 overleaf.

<sup>15</sup> Initiation and introduction to practical work lasted for 10 days with trainer Drăghici Gheorghe. Ibidem, tab 105.

<sup>16</sup> Starting with December 6<sup>th</sup>, he continued training for 15 days in Bacău under the guidance of regional trainer Osman Gheorghe and the team leader in Bacău, Grigorescu Alexandru. Ibidem, file 38/1965, tab 33.

<sup>17</sup> Teams of 7 or 8 representatives were convened. Their training was carried in accordance with provisions of DGPP Lecturer Qualification Regulation in close cooperation with other specialized units in the Center. See: Ibidem, file 37/1968, tab 35.

<sup>18</sup> Was born in Crețești Commune, Vaslui County on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1938; member of P.C.R. since 1963; graduate of 3 years Pedagogical Institute – Faculty of Philology in Iași; V<sup>th</sup> year student at the Faculty of Philology – „Al. I. Cuza” University – Iași; inspector of the District Committee for Culture and Arts – Bârlad; inspector of the County Committee for Culture and Arts – Vaslui; married – 1 child. See: Ibidem, tab 79.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, file 87/1968, tab 76.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, tab 67.

<sup>21</sup> In the first days after their arrival in the locality, representatives were presented to the party body, editorial boards, radio stations, typographies, museums, exhibitions, and the institutions with which DGPP collaborated. The representatives worked in parallel with the trainers in reading new publications (1968 – new newspapers appeared in municipalities and county capitals established after the administrative and territorial reorganization – n.n.).

<sup>22</sup> ANIC, Fund for the Press and Printing Committee, file 87/1968, tabs 65–66.

Vâlcea. At the end of each week of the training period, was analyzed the way in which the professional qualification at local level was carried out, taking the measures imposed by the established situations<sup>23</sup>. All these were meant to guide representative Diaconu Nicolae and start the actual censorship activity.

Pascu Gheorghe, representative for the town of Târgu-Mureș, whose qualification took place from April 8<sup>th</sup> to April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1968 under the direct supervision of the team leader, Gidofalvi Zoltan<sup>24</sup>, was subject to the same process. During this period, according to the work schedule, Pascu Gheorghe was assigned for the parallel reading of five editions of *Steaua Roșie* newspaper, two editions of *Vörös Zászló* newspaper and three of *Harghita* newspaper. He participated in three shows of the Regional Radio Station and at the approval of printed materials at the typography (on days when he was on duty). On the other hand, he attended two weekly work meetings, where he got familiar with the way of analyzing the interventions carried out, as well as with other work problems that arose during that period. As a result of the work carried and discussions had with representative Pascu Gheorghe, team leader (Gidofalvi Zoltan) found that he possessed the appropriate political and ideological knowledge to be a lecturer of DGPP, that he did not show any exaggeration tendencies in the sensing of issues, whether political-ideological issues or work-related issues. But for the latter, he was suggested “to have a wider orientation in the future” in order to understand their essence and purpose. In this respect, he was advised to pay more attention to the thorough study of the secret data contained in the lists of ministries and the secret military ones. Following that, considering that he would receive help in the future from the members of the team, Gidofalvi Zoltan said he would be “able to read by himself” starting with April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1968.

Gidofalvi Zoltan was also the one who supervised and coordinated the qualification of representative for Miercurea Ciuc, Rebendics Iosif, qualification carried during April 15<sup>th</sup> to April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1968, in Târgu-Mureș. The stages of qualification of Rebendics were similar to those of Pascu Gheorghe. However, unlike the latter, Rebendics had exaggerated tendencies due to the exigency he was working with. Gidofalvi Zoltan was of the opinion that he would discard them after he gained some experience. Consequently, he considered that he could work by himself, proposing that as of April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1968<sup>25</sup>.

Other qualification internships were carried in Cluj during April 15<sup>th</sup> – April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1968 attended by Mănară Adrian<sup>26</sup>, in Târgu-Jiu and Craiova during April 15<sup>th</sup> – April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1968, where Tărel Constantin, representative of Târgu-Jiu town and Gorj County, was introduced to local work issues by the trainer of Training-Contract Directorate – V. Nicolau<sup>27</sup>.

Another way of professional development of the censors consisted of the practice within **the various units of the Center** (Bucharest) for a period of about two weeks, a way considered by the representatives to be so useful that they even proposed it to become permanent. At the end of internship, the representatives prepared papers on the basis of the material viewed or read and then confronted them with the unit’s notes. Thus, it was possible to see to what extent the practitioners have noticed the existing problems. Some, more conscientious, also read some of the monthly intervention reports of those units, discussing the concerns with the lecturers in these services. The lecturers were always concern in making available the most representative materials, accompanied by the necessary explanations. The topics addressed by the materials in the magazine, translations from the Hungarian magazines, referral notes were very different: history, literature, poetry, materials for reconsideration of some of the most prominent people of art, science and national culture. Thus, the provincial censors had accumulated new knowledge necessary for their fair orientation towards the political issues related to various problems, which they could also transmit to the members of the team they were part of.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, tab 65.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, tab 58.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, f. 59.

<sup>26</sup> Supervised by the team leader– Pircălab Florian.

<sup>27</sup> Was proposed that starting with April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1968 he would start work by himself.

Starting with 1951<sup>28</sup>, were introduced meetings of DGPP representatives in the country as a form of training. Until the '70s they were held twice a year in Bucharest, after which they were held in provinces where larger teams were operating (Cluj, Timișoara, Iași), being convened all representatives from the nearby counties (in that area). For example, at the meeting held in Iași on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1974, in addition to the management of the Training-Control Directorate and the management staff of the specialized units, attended also delegates of the counties: Vaslui, Suceava, Botoșani, Neamț, Bacău, Buzău, Vrancea, Prahova, Constanța, Ialomița, Tulcea, Galați, Brăila. At the one held in Cluj-Napoca on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1976, were convened those from Mureș, Bihor, Sălaj, Bistrița-Năsăud, Maramureș, Satu Mare, Alba and the one held in Timișoara on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1976, attended representatives of Timiș, Arad, Hunedoara, Caraș-Severin counties.

During the meetings, the work of the delegates and of the Directorate-General, respectively of the Training-Control Directorate was analyzed, detailing more the shortcomings than their achievements, on the grounds that the negative examples are a more efficient participant handbook in understanding the problems. Each time, the new tasks and attributions were processed “in the light” of the latest party documents, and at the same time were taken into account the gaps arisen, as well as the working methods for fulfilling the tasks. Also, the designated teams would present activity reports (monthly, quarterly or annually), even co-reports, based on which took place the discussions, thus achieving a real exchange of experience between delegates across the country.

Throughout its existence (1949–1977), being concerned about the continuous improvement of the work done by its employees, DGPP/ CPP coordinated, supervised and controlled the professional development of representatives. In this respect, it regularly organized meetings, attendance at the history courses of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the Soviet Union and at Marxism – Leninism courses, completion of studies in different forms of state education, attendance at party education courses, through which it increased the political and ideological level of the censors. Experience exchanges between teams or internships within various units in the Center (Bucharest), for approximately two weeks, represented other ways of professional development, involving the thoroughgoing study of control procedures and increasing of political and ideological level of delegates.

The DGPP set up the Training-Control Service, which was directly responsible for both the training of representatives and the verification of their activity carried in the province. The field trainers within this training and control department performed regular travels or whenever needed in every locality where censor teams were operating.

The wide range of forms of professional development used by the censorship institution confirms that DGPP has been deeply concerned about having only qualified, well-trained people, especially ideological, who through their interventions, have defended the party's propaganda of hostile, defamatory texts that would either distort the political line of the party or would minimize the achievements of the communist regime.

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<sup>28</sup> In the Minutes of the Regional and District Press Service of 11 May 1951, the first meeting was scheduled to take place on 15 June 1951.