

ASPECTS REGARDING YOUTH'S EDUCATION IN OLT COUNTY DURING KING CAROL II (1938-1940)¹

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Abstract. *In this paper I have analyzed a number of elements from educational overall used by authorities when they tried to create or force new behaviour models in youth's ranks. In between 1938 and 1940, youth education was a field with high priority for central and local authorities. It was guided so the final result will be creation of a "new man", creation of citizens stated by the Constitution, loyalist to the country and king. Measures regarding youth education targeted also removing them from the influence of political currents seen as subversive, first of all, Legionnaire Movement, known being the fact that, before February 10/11, 1938, a large number of young people where sympathizers of that movement. Therefore, their activities had to take place in the school, the brakes in the "străjeriei" in conditions established by authorities, and the free time used to prepare the homework for the next day. Any defiance will be severely punished. More than that, if the youths were suspected of sympathizing with the legionnaires or legionnaire activities they were ban from all the schools in the country, denying them, practically, the right to education.*

Keywords: *education, youth, school, free time, Olt county, King Carol the 2nd.*

Date of February 10/11, 1938 has become, in Romanians history, synonym with the coup of King Carol II. Replacing Octavian Goga's government with a "consultative"² government, "personality's government"³, ruled by the Patriarch Miron Cristea, was the signal for changing the internal structures of Romanian state. In the same time, it was the end of democratic system tradition, which lasted in Romania for more than seven decades, being replaced with an authoritative regime, dominated by "a monarchic missionary that desire internal peace and social harmony"⁴.

The carlist regime meant for Romanians a new experience, in which words like: "authority", "freedom" "citizen", "discipline", "work", "education", etc, started to get meanings, we might say, original, all of them having connotations that included, mainly, citizen's obligations toward the Country. The assertion is even more valid if we consider that by the Constitution from February 27, 1938, was proclaimed the pre-emption of the state's interests in front of the individual interests⁵. Suggestive in that sense is article 4 from the fundamental law of Romania, that said: "All Romanians, regardless of ethnic religion and religious believe, have the duty to: *see the Country as the most important goal of their lives (ours italics)*, die defending the her integrity, independence and dignity; to contribute thru their work at her moral ascend and economical improvement; to fulfil with faith the community tasks imposed to them by laws and contribute voluntarily to fulfil the public tasks, without which the State cannot survive"⁶.

Carlist regime protagonists wanted to implement a series of measures, reforms, with the final goal of changing the fundamental structures of Romanian State and, especially, creating a new society that will be grouped around his leader, King Carol II. Every Romanian citizen had the duty to reach the "standard" established in art. 4 from the Constitution imposed in February 27, 1938, that came from the fact that it was proclaimed the pre-emption of state's interests before the individual ones.

In the speech held at teachers congress from the entire country, that took place in Constanța, on September 4, 1938, Armand Călinescu stated the fact that: "The individual today is no longer interested in himself, but only as a useful factor, an element of progress in State's life. (...) individual must be seen thru collective's interests and not the collective thru individual interest"⁷. That conception had to be the main objective of teacher's preoccupations in the future, seen as a useful factor, indispensable for the collective, because their activity had to contribute to enforce and sustain State's power.

Even from the beginning, the teachers has been notified by Ministry of National Education, thru official letter from March 19, 1938 sent to the Inspectorate of School Region Craiova, that by teaching their study subjects they must not bring harm to the new regime. Also, they have the obligation to explain to the students, using conferences, the

¹ The study represents part of the doctoral research named „Royal Residency of Olt County (1938-1940)”, in progress in Craiova University, Faculty of Socio-Human Science, History Department, thru Project POSDRU/6/1.5/S/14 - „Improving the attractiveness, quality and efficiency of university studies by offering doctoral scholarship”.

² Keith Hitchins, *România 1866-1947*, Translation from English by George G. Potra and Delia Răzdolescu, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1996, p. 448.

³ *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VIII, *România întregită (1918-1940)*, coordinator: Ioan Scurtu, scientific secretary: Petre Otu, Bucharest, Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 2003, p. 385.

⁴ Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria românilor. De la origini până în zilele noastre*, Edition fourth and note on edition by Stelian Neagoe, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1996, p. 228.

⁵ Christophe Midan, *Carol al II-lea și teroarea istoriei: 1930-1940*, Romanian version by Daniela Codruța Midan, Bucharest, Military Publishing House, 2008, p. 77.

⁶ *Constituțiunea Regele Carol II. Promulgată prin Înalt Decret Regal Nr. 1045 din 27 Februarie 1938. Publicată în „Monitorul Oficial” Nr. 48 din 27 Februarie 1938*, Edited exclusively by „Liga pentru Unitatea Culturală a tuturor Românilor” (League for Cultural Unit of the All the Romanian), f. I., 1938, p. 10.

⁷ Armand Călinescu, *Noul regim: cuvântări 1938-1939*, Edition 2nd, Bucharest, Do MinoR Publishing House, 2003, p. 42-43.

meaning of the new Constitution and, with every opportunity, to contribute to creation of order and discipline idea in student's ranks⁸.

In the researched period, youth's education was a priority domain for central and local authorities. It was pointed in such a direction that the result will be the creation of a "new man", of citizens in the meaning stated by the Constitution, loyal to the Country and King. The measures regarding youth education targeted also removing them from the influence of political currents seen as subversive, mainly, regarding the Legionnaire Movement, known being the fact that, before February 10/11, 1938, a large number of young people where sympathizers of that movement.

In the paper called "Aspects regarding youth's education on Olt County during king Carol the II (1938-1940)" we tried to analyze a few elements from the educational assembly that authorities used to try to create or impose new behaviour patterns and form new mentalities in youth's ranks.

Suggestive for the models that had to be applied in education or, to use the term recorded in documents "re-education" ("*redisciplinarea*") the youth, are the directives given by the Ministry of National Education to the subordinate authorities on Mai 11, 1938.

To justify the instructions, it was specified that numerous students wore part of societies or groups that had subversive intentions or they were influenced by different political currents and therefore the manifested ideas and attitudes incompatible with "the spirit and discipline" that Romanian school was promoting. A growth in number of disciplinary cases proved, in authority's opinion, that "the evil is bigger and dipper rooted to be removed only by disciplinary measures"⁹.

Therefore, for re-education of youth, first had to be applied a preventive method that was, mainly, careful supervision of youngsters inside and outside the school with the purpose of finding in time opinions and ideas against the valid laws. This task became compulsory for directors, class masters and entire professorial corp. School council should send away with no hesitation from school the "lost students" – students that thru their behaviour and attitude could be a danger for contaminating their colleagues¹⁰.

Besides sanction the lost students, they had to adopted the method, saw more pedagogical, of "enlightenment and guidance" thru examples of patriotic sacrifice, given by history, and thru lectures from pages of classical writers. Every lection needed to follow the educational objective, considering that "There is no lection from which we cannot get for our students a guide for life and for healthy judgement over things and social phenomenon; in every study class can be shown to students examples for hard work and precious teachings can be given for the life that they expect, showing them the need and obligation, natural for every man, to honor the closest one and to respect the rules of life in the State, who do not allowed us to became the judges of our kind"¹¹.

School's activity had to have as target national education fixed on the foundation of Christian moral, spread by Orthodox Church. For the Christian-Moral education to be accomplished was requested from the teachers to be good examples and to go to church. Also, students had to be taken to church every Sunday and holyday not only by the religion teacher but also by the other teachers, the director being the one who named two or three teachers to fulfil that job.

By strengthening the Orthodox Church and promoting the "Christian ideal", the authorities were convinced that "our youth will no longer be exposed to the wanderings of these days, but they will follow the path of sacrificing work"¹². The religion teacher had to be assisted in his work by the other teachers, who where not allowed, that thru information that they transmitted to students as "scientific truths" to contradict the teachings of Orthodox Church¹³.

All the teachers, especially the ones that teach Romanian language, had to contribute at development of student's interest for lecture that is "good, that enrich the soul and turn one's mind toward generous ideas". In that sense, had to be eliminated from school's program "the writers of which opera is not compatible with the purposes of moral and national education"¹⁴. In the other classes, the teachers were forced to infuse to the students the pleasure and interest to get deepen into the practice of lecture or other personal works, giving them the possibility to assert during work communities they had to organize – literal meetings, school festivities, different sport contests or of other nature.

Also, the teachers had the duty to bear in mind that every student represented "a man and a personality to become, which has its own dignity and pride, which must not be humiliated or offended". Therefore corporal punishments of any nature had to be avoided (forbidden, also, by law and school rules, and still the persist) and offending words, that "will have no other effect but the student will close his soul towards that teacher and therefore any attempt of approaching and good redress"¹⁵. Therefore, the teachers had to gain the confidence of the students and not to give the possibility of appearing of hard feelings or frustrations that, in time, might become dangerous.

⁸ Department Dolj County of the National Archive (Following as: D. C. N. A., Dolj), fund Liceul „Elena Cuza” Craiova, file No. 1/1937-1938, f. 351.

⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 453.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 453-453v.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, f. 453v.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 454.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

On the other hand, despite the fact that wearing the uniform was compulsory, being a way of having discipline and control for authorities, was considered that is not enough and the teachers must inculcate in students' minds the conviction that is a pride and honor to wear the uniform.

The supervision class had to be used for the actual purpose, being forbidden to give it another destination. The supervision class had to be an opportunity for moral guidance: in the inferior class using adequate exemplifications and advices given regarding different events or happenings from class's life and on the superior class by discussing the problems of national and moral interest.

In the same time, had to be intensified the contact with student's families, because was considered that many of the parents did not understand the duty they had towards their children and therefore the school authorities had to "lamine them and guide them to a closer collaboration for the purpose of children's behalf"¹⁶.

Over the school activities, the supporters of carlist regime conceived in detail the means to control the free time of the students, engaging them into *Străjeria*'s activities, seen as "the best way to send away from the minds of our school kids any currents or ideas that might do damage to morale and national education. Thru that activity we organize in a useful manner the free time of the students (*ours italics*) and we keep them away from bad influences exercised by the social environment, the street and different currents that seek to get hold of our student's minds"¹⁷.

The *Străjeria* had to get all the youth's energy and focus it towards actions of national and social interest. The main points of the *străjeresc*'s program where: the cult for traditions, for the heroes' actions, for country, flag and King. The *străjerești*'s activities had as final objective development of "a high social conception": work to develop the Romanian village, camaraderie (collegiality), civic devotion, deep respect (veneration) for public assets, for state's dignitary, priests, scholars and village elders. Putting in practice the *strejărească*'s doctrine had to lead to the birth of "new man – heroic man of tomorrow's Romania"¹⁸. Motto of the *străjeri* was: "Faith and work for Country and King"¹⁹. In this context, the school directors and teachers were called to collaborate with *străjeri*'s commanders with the purpose of intensification of *străjerești*'s activities.

Youth's education was an important scope, being, in the entire period, in the attention of the authorities from Bucharest, also from the ones in territory. Was considered that "in the exceptional times of today, care and preoccupations of everybody have to be in direction of school youth, like one that is going to form the ruling class of tomorrow"²⁰. Modeling the youth was essential for the persistence of the regime, the protagonists of it never thinking that the existence of that regime will be very short.

In the days of 26 and 27 September 1938, from the order of royal resident of Olt County, Romulus Scărișoreanu, regarding order and discipline of the students from the county, two meetings of local authorities took place. First one was called by general sanitary inspector of Olt County, V. Teodorescu, and the purpose was establishment of surveillance and control measures of school element to keep it away from social disease²¹. That meeting did not have the expected result, therefore another one was held, next day, the discussions being extended to "care and preoccupations of everybody regarding the youth in school from educational, disciplinary, school and medical point of view", authorities being the ones that "had the duty to contribute to supervision of students, in order to influence them only toward teaching and to take care of their physical and moral health"²².

The meeting took place in the headquarters of royal residency of the County, being presided by general secretary of Olt County, Ilie Gănescu. At that meeting attended representative of main public authorities: general secretary of Olt County, second inspector of education, professor Buldur (Boldur), general inspector for health, doctor V. Teodorescu, Dolj County prefect, colonel R. Dimitriu; vicemayor of Craiova city, lieutenant – colonel R. Petroianu; commander of Craiova Market, lieutenant – colonel Dobrian; commander of Gendarme Legion Dolj County, lieutenant – colonel C. Popescu; commander of Stajery Legion of Dolj County, Engineer I. Săceanu; commander of *Străjere* Cohorta of Dolj County, Elvira Georgescu²³.

All the decisions regarding "school police" taken on September 27th meeting have been the object of the order issued by the Education Inspectorate on September 29th, 1938, order sent to all school directors from the entire Olt County²⁴. According to that, the school and administrative authorities had to take the following measures:

- Education Inspectorate had to send in the shortest time possible a written order to all the schools in Craiova and rest of the cities, in which to remind them of law dispositions and ministry's instructions related to the way of supervision and control of students and their hosts, and also the way the student had to behave in school and outside of it.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 454v.

¹⁸ *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I, *Statul*, comitetul de redacție: Dimitrie Gusti, Constantin Orghidan, Mircea Vulcănescu, Virgiliu Leonte, Edition I, Bucharest, Imprimeria Națională, 1938, p. 489.

¹⁹ „Monitorul Oficial”, part I, No. 292, 15 decembrie 1938, p. 5942.

²⁰ D. C. A. N., Dolj, fund Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt, Administrative Service, file No. 38/1938, f. 40.

²¹ *Ibidem*, f. 54-58.

²² *Ibidem*, f. 40.

²³ *Ibidem*, f. 45.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 56.

- In shortest possible time (until October 8th inclusive), school's directors had to issue to students identity cards, wearing them being mandatory for school youth so they can be identified at any moment by school, administrative and police authorities. Also, the students had to wear an order number on every coat they were wearing²⁵.

- In Craiova city, in order to stop vagrancy and wasting time, they had to forbid the access on the streets of students after 20:00 hours and, between 18:00 and 20:00 hours, walking in groups and individual on Calea Unirii, between Residential Palace and Minerva Hotel. Also, on boulevards, streets, parks and public gardens (Lunca Mofleni, Bibescu Park, Racecourse, Mihai Viteazul Garden and County Palace Garden) the school kids were not allowed after 19:30. Before that hour, access in the centre of the city had to be permitted only for buying books and materials for school²⁶. Police headquarters and Market Commandership had order to arrest immediately bad students, which had to be taken into special arranged rooms. In Craiova, a room had to be prepared for boys in College "Carol I", and one for the girls in high school "Elena Cuza"²⁷.

- In less than a week from receiving the order, every school had to send to Police Headquarters lists with the hosts of the students, including for the ones living with their parents. Also, the same lists had to be issued to the City Hall so they could put together groups of students to take baths on lower prices. The form masters were forced to visit the student's hosts "to see the physical, health and moral conditions in which the students they supervise are living in and they had to make reports about what they see". It was considered that this is needed because: "We have received signals that are hosts that have too many students that live in promiscuity environment, mixed boys and girls together, in the worst possible hygiene conditions"²⁸.

- Student's access to cinema was restricted²⁹: those older than 16 could go only Saturday, Sunday and holydays, between 16:00 – 20:00 hours, but only to watch cultural movies or those that "do not contravene to moral and educational purposes of the school" and only accompanied by parents or, in case of their absence, only having a written permit, released by the school where than student is studying. In contrary case, the students were arrested. The cinema's owners were forced to bring cultural and scientific movies, and they had to post "Students are allowed". The surveillance of the cinema's had to be done by the teachers, police and the owners³⁰.

- It was forbidden for the students in secondary and primary school to play football or other games in other placed then the ones arranged by the school and Country's *Straja*, and also participation of students in games or other sports activities as assistants because it was considered that "Sport means recreation, variation, harmonious development of one's body, sport is health, but this is sport of exercise and not sport for assistance, which is a real plague that sweep the kids and does not bring any gain". Therefore, he had to be done during classes of physical education, during *străjeriei* "when had to be animation and good cheer, when it will be brotherhood and harmony, not screaming, roaring and strong language"³¹.

School authorities had the obligation to, using periodical conferences – where the parents attended – notify the students about their duty's not only in the school but also outside of it, and also the penalties risked by all the bad students if they don't follow the measures adopted by authorities "in the interest of their education, culture, health and

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ Regarding student's conduit from Craiova municipality outside of school, Dolj county prefect had issue, even from February 15, 1938, a circular order to Craiova Municipality Police Headquarter and to the other competent authorities in the field (Security inspector, school inspector, school's directors etc.). According to that order, the directors where bound to notify the teachers that "all students found wondering the street after 19:00 hours will be immediately placed under arrest and sent the next day to correspondent direction with sentinels. I implore that they should be told to stay at home, to guide their work toward culture and re-educate the soul lost today by currents that have no use and no connection youthful soul. (...) When it will be appreciated that is the case that a part of the students – of course those that present enough warranties – show the need to go over 19:00 hours, the form masters can do it by issue a written order signed and stamped, in which will be specified the day and hours when the student can walk after 19:00 hours" (Idem, fund Prefectura Județului Dolj, Administrative Service, file No. 203/1938, f. 14).

²⁷ Idem, fund Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt, Administrative Service, file No. 38/1938, f. 56v.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ The restriction to cinemas and on the streets where older problems, hard to solve, an evidence being the address from Inspectorate of School Region Craiova from November 12, 1937, sent to directors of secondary schools. In it following where specified: "students of secondary schools walk into public places, cinemas and spectacles inappropriate for scholars, especially in the night". Therefore, following measures have to be taken: "1. Walking on Calea Unirii will be forbidden at any time and going out after 7 o'clock in the night; 2. Notify them again that it is forbidden for them to go to spectacles, without permission given by school direction to each of them; 3. Interventions have been made to Police Prefecture to make serious controls to students in town and spectacles, asking them to show the credentials from the school, those who will not have it will be taken to Police Prefecture. They are not allowed to go to cinema, only to see cultural movies and only in the afternoon hours, 4-7, with the permission from point 2; 4. It's understandable that *all of these are forbidden to them even accompanied by the parents (our underlining)*, take severe measures for supervision using the teachers and administrative personnel especially outside of school, punishing any defiance" (Idem, fund Liceul „Elena Cuza”, file No. 1/1937-1938, f. 112).

³⁰ Idem, fund Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt, Administrative Service, file No. 38/1938, f. 42-43; Diana-Mihaela Păunoiu, *Aspecte privind cenzura cinematografică în cadrul Ținutului Olt (1938-1940)*, in „Annals of the University of Craiova. History”, year XIV, No. 2(16)/2009, Craiova, Universitaria Publishing House, p. 301-308.

³¹ D. C. N. A., Dolj, fund Rezidența Regală a Ținutului Olt, Administrative Service, file No. 38/1938.

preparation for a new life”³². Also, the directors had to supervise the students very carefully “so that political subversive ideas will not slipped between the students”³³.

The fear that carlist regime had about reactivation of movements seen as subversive, especially Legionnaire Movement, give birth to the need of supervision and “re-educating” the youth, leading to extreme measures, like elimination of students from schools, taking away from them the right of education. Suggestive in this sense is the telegraphic order send by ministry of Internal, Armand Călinescu, No. 24983/1938, sent to royal resident of Olt County: “Lately reappearance of legionnaire manifestations have been observed. (...) the measures for supervision and suppression of that subversive movement had to be applied with increased hardness. Besides supervision and sending to justice please apply the following measures. *Juniors and students proved to participate in that movement will be eliminated definitely from. (...) No person that starts actions or subversive political manifestations, spread bills etc. cannot enjoy any advantage or connection with state authorities they undermine (ours italics)*”³⁴.

Royal resident relays the order to Inspectorate of School Region Craiova who, in his turn, relays it to primary and secondary school directors on November 1st 1938. They have been asked to “be more vigilantes and to supervise closely the students in their manifestations in and outside of school, being directly responsible for what it might happened from this point of view (*activation of Legionnaire Movement – our note*) in the school you are managing. School director is bound to call back the students from any political manifestation, organizing manifestations, conferences, theatre, cooperation etc.”³⁵.

On the other hand, with the visits in territory, the commander of *Strejăresc* County of Olt County has observed that “discipline amongst students is poor”, and the matter of wearing order numbers on their uniforms and school initials where they are studying have not been solved completely. Therefore, on December 7, 1939, the inspector of School Region Craiova was sending an address to schools directors, in which they were notified that “wearing the order number with school’s initials was absolutely compulsory also on *strejărească* uniform. That number will be wear by students sewing on the left hand under the “*ocușor*” [beadge] which was the silk mark of the Country’s *Straji*”³⁶. The outfit of every *străjer* in and outside of school had to be very careful watched by flock (*sto!*) and centurie commanders. This address shows that the dispositions given on September 29, 1939 by the Inspectorate of School Region Craiova have not been fulfil totally.

Also, the strict supervision of the students has not been realized efficiently, the evidence being the letter from February 29, 1940 sent by the Minister of National Education, Direction of Secondary Schools, to schools directors. According to that, the Minister has received numerous reports “in which we are showed that students from secondary grade schools are doing things and facts that are not appropriate to their student age and it seems to show a decrease in school discipline. We had to apply sanctions towards the students found to play cards and consuming alcohol even inside the school and *we had to send away from school the students that, thru their attitude and their actions became unworthy to be in any school’s catalogue (our underline)*”³⁷.

The repeated changes in the didactic core, caused by recruitments, made the role of class master to every teacher. The directors had to notify the teachers that it was theirs, in the school year 1939-1940, the task to watch carefully the life of students in and out of school. Also, the contact with the student’s families had to be kept by continuing the conferences with the student’s parents³⁸.

In conclusion, even in the light of those mentioned above, we can say that the methods imposed by authorities – preventive, pedagogical, repressive – did not had the expected results, the plan regarding “re-education” of youth and creation of a “new man” was one really complex, and putting it in practice required a long time. The internal and external events made that Carlist regime will have a short life, King Carol the 2nd being forced to abdicate on September 6, 1939.

³² *Ibidem*, f. 44

³³ *Ibidem*, f. 57v.

³⁴ *Idem*, fund Liceul „Elena Cuza”, file No. 1/1938-1939, f. 186.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, file No. 1/1939-1940, f. 132.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

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