

1945 - THE EARLY DAYS OF INSTITUTIONALIZED COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA

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Motto: The propaganda “is work not only for the intellectuals but also for our entire Party, the kind of work which must be led by a group within the Party. Every single one of us doesn’t prove to be a good communist unless he or she cannot be an agitator and propagandist for our ideas”¹.

During 1944 some propagandistic manifestos took place, but they were of small, unimportant proportions. To blame for this fact is, on one hand, the small number of members that the communist party had, the lack of specialist, or a well-defined ideological direction, and, on the other hand, a better propagandistic activity used by historical parties.

Starting from 1945 we can acknowledge a powerful offensive of communist propaganda generated, not only by the political evolution of Romania, but also by the continuing improvement of those involved in this phenomenon.

There are two moments which define the subsequent frame of political propaganda: the first national propaganda conference held by the Romanian Communist Party (the 28th of January 1945)² and the meeting of the representatives in charge with the “Propaganda and Agitation” elected from the district committees all over the country (from the 11th to the 14th of June 1945)³. These two important conferences (the first being subsequently transformed into congress) set the theoretical foundation of propaganda and, at the same time, draw a detailed picture of evolution for the propagandistic phenomenon during the first six months of 1945). After these “meetings”, although they didn’t explicitly legitimize themselves from within, all propaganda related conferences keep the same structure and follow the same steps (the representatives from the districts present a report concerning their local situation which is subsequently discussed in open forum, followed by the guiding lines of those responsible with Agitprop in the Department and the mobilization conclusions).

What’s amazing about the two conferences in 1945 is the development of the phenomenon (mostly a reverse process of process of evolution) and the way that it is perceived by the receivers. We can speak about a reverse process of evolution as long as the public’s interest but mostly its enthusiasm clearly diminished between the two events. After this moment we can observe a coming back to the initial stage. In January all the speakers can and do everything. In June,

¹ A.N.I.C., *fond P.C.M. – Cancelarie*, dosar 4/ 1945, f. 40.

² *Idem*.

³ *Idem*, dosar 61/ 1945.

the picture in much more detailed and tinted. More and more often the shortcomings, the hardships and obstacles to be overturned are mentioned.

If, on the first instance they agree to no more than a couple of areas where the propaganda didn't reach its target, six months later the attitude is completely different.

The First National Propagandist's Congress

Even if Iosif Chișinevschi⁴ (from Propagandistic Organization of the Central Committee of PCR) speech during the congress took place rather through the end of debates, for the benefit of this study we will choose it as starting point because it perfectly sets the parameters of our endeavor.

This, the Department of Propaganda was created on the 28th of August 1944⁵, but, after five months still were people who didn't know what its activity consisted in or they could not mentally represent the notions they dealt with. From the Communist Party's point of view "Propaganda means to preach an idea, a concept, a theory. For us this means preaching the history of Bolshevik Party, which synthesizes this theory (...). Propaganda is used orally and in writing, therefore both the press and our conferences and schools are gathered in propaganda"⁶. (From this definition the visual and mixed propaganda are omitted although they would be very much used subsequently by the next rulers of Romania).

It is easily noticeable that, from the very beginning, a clear separation is made between agitation and propaganda, even if, the first notion will be included in the second during the evolution of the propagandistic phenomenon. Initially, "the agitation refers to the most immediate problem, if it is concretely applied to daily problems, our theory will become a common good for entire people. Agitation is the vehicle through which the Romanian people are closer to our teaching, to our concepts. Through communist agitation we make our people aware of our slogans and our current problems"⁷.

For propaganda to work, it first needs its message to be clear, being proved that the people are more receptive to things they understood. For propaganda to succeed it is mandatory that "each region, district and town should have a propaganda department"⁸.

Also, during this congress, the structure of the Propaganda Section of the Central Committee is announced: one secretary (appointed by the C.C.) and four lieutenants who will be responsible each for the press, the artistic matters, music and publishing. Apart from them, there will be the translating committees which will translate the documents to and from foreign languages (especially from Russian and the languages of the minorities).

⁴ Iosif Chișinevschi, Jew from Basarabia, leader of Propagandistic Organization of the Central Committee of PCR.

⁵ A.N.I.C, *fond P.C.M. – Cancelarie*, dosar 4/ 1945, f. 102.

⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 109.

⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 110.

⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 115.

Following this example, the territorial departments should be structured as well, with a special attention concerning the press relations. From the ten representatives of the regional departments, only those come from Transylvania gave away the fact that in their particular area the propagandistic activity is less productive, the other spoke highly of a number of activity which, time passing, same to us childish, immature and with a small impact over the population.

Disregarding the awkwardness, exaggerations and the obvious omissions from the reports and the subsequent debate, this conference, the first on a long line, brings to our attention some very valuable information. In fact they can be divided: the first one contains information shaped as definitions, explanation, ways in which the propagandistic phenomenon went on, and a second category, read between the lines, which showed how the propaganda concretely went on starting from August 1944 to January 1945.

Following a pattern, every speaker confronts almost the same problems: the national press (the way in which it was spread), the local press, activities and demonstrations, the mass organizations and the doctrinaire school.

a). The national press – wherever you look, the same problems emerge. On top of the fact that the national press is not in too much demand (for example no more than 1500 copies a day are sold in Pitești), the distribution works even worse (it sits and waits in train stations without even an attempt to be distributed). That is the reason why “the local party organizations must establish as a primary task the way in which the store owner displays and sells “Scântea” (“The Sparkle”, our note)”⁹.

b). The local press – the common complaint found in every report is: too many local newspapers. Due to an easily understandable reason, overvalues the propagandist, born on command, feel the need to own newspapers. Almost every little town has more than one newspaper, on top of the regional newspapers, the mass organizations' papers, the street and wall newspapers etc. The important number of newspaper sheets and the small number of people evolved in this phenomenon makes them almost impossible to be controlled. This way, the newspapers begin to defy the purpose they were created for, bringing more harm than good to the cause. On top of that we can add the lack of qualified staff, the paper crises, the big costs, the irregularly publications and primarily the inability to create and keep an interested target public (for example, for the border areas the main topics should be the minorities issues and some newspapers should be edited in the minorities' languages).

But, there is a well-organized local paper which can be taken as an example for the regional press: “Moldova nouă/ The New Moldavia”¹⁰ from Iași. The newspaper isn't lead by the propaganda, but nevertheless, it reach 5.600-5.800 numbers printed. The editorial staff consists of 15 members, divided in four

⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 99.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 49.

compartments, one for the trade unions, economy, peasants and young people, one focused for the local issues, the third for the national politics and mass organizations and the last one for the foreign politics. Their monthly budget comes near three million five hundred thousand lei¹¹. “Moldova nouă” is, by far, the best organized local paper (or, at least, that’s the logical conclusion we can draw from the reports of this congress), and its “success” is based on the staff’s preoccupation for information; they set press offices for the mass organizations and correspondence offices with the national newspapers and last but not least the success dues to the political control over all their articles. The results are considered satisfactory as long as we can talk about profits, although there are some shortcomings: the letters from the printing house are easily worn-out making the newspaper hardly readable, they don’t use clichés and the lack of paper is obvious (as well as all over the country)¹².

c). The doctrinaire training schools – many brag about owning one but the problem is they are taught the history and ideology of communist party for the period of 1 to 3 months.

But, what they all seem to omit in their reports is the weak intellectual level of those who are taught and mostly of the teachers. On the top of that we can add the lack of teaching material and propagandistic support.

d). The village propaganda – overcall it can be considered a sounding failure caused by the human factor (those who impose the propaganda) and by their inability to adjust their speech according to the their auditorium. The selection system of those who impose propaganda is short, those elected having no ruts or connection to the villagers can be added; although, they come to the demonstrations that the communists organize, they do it as part of some kind of entertainment (as a theatre play, a “hora” or a sitting).

The prototype for village propaganda which proposed Ana Pauker offers to start with the propagandists’ selection: „we should talk with the most intelligent people and then, let them talk, make them talk in order to see how these people think, to see what we can learn from them (...), which are the most dangerous moments which should be avoided, which are the most pressing desires, which should be underlined, which are the most convincing matters and arguments for the peasantry”¹³. Then it should exist a permanent relation to the village reality “to learn from their life in order to be able to teach the others”¹⁴. At the last, but not least it must be understood by all involved in this phenomenon that, propaganda is not an office job, that all materials should be taken directly from the field and, only afterwards, processing in the office.

e). Mass organization: U.P. (The Patriots Union), A.P. (The Patriotic Defence), T.P. (The Progressive Youth), U.F.A. (The Antifascist Women Union), A.R.L.U.S.

¹¹ Romanian national currency.

¹² *Ibidem*, f. 50.

¹³ *Ibidem*, f. 85.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 140.

(The Association for good relation with the Soviet Union) – each of those organizations lead their own propaganda using balls, theatre plays, study circles and Russian language apprehension, amatory artistic teams, working class talents, tea-parties, dinner parties and choir shows. There were a lot of booklets printed as: “The bases of Leninism”, “The Party’s spoken word” etc. and conferences were hold on: “Fascism and Democracy”, “Us and the Soviet Union”, “The Soviet Constitution”, “Tudor Vladimirescu Division”, or “The Northern Transylvania and Moldavia’s issue” etc.¹⁵. “The Popular Universities” and “The Universities for the Working Class” are two other ways in which the propaganda gained supporters. Except A.R.L.U.S., the other organizations have their activities overleaped because they don’t point an exact target audience to whom they address and the politics involved is insufficient. A feeble attempt to limit the interest fields can be observed, The Patriotic Defence carrying on with a campaign under the name “Mother and child”.

f). Actions and demonstrations – also regarding this chapter of propaganda we can observed that, on a territorial level, the communist organized the same kind of demonstrations (anti-Rădescu demonstration, pro-Soviet demonstration, the celebration of some events which subsequently would become national – 7th of November). The mistakes made by the national leadership will be repeated in the territory, the propagandists being unprepared to handle the so-called “reaction propaganda” (from the historic parties and minorities).

g). The cultural propaganda – it’s a distinct type of propaganda which took place undetected by the propagandists from the territory and that’s the reason why they used it in a very small amount (through cinema theatres, amateur theatres, poetry sittings art and last, but not least through setting up libraries. The cooperation between the propagandists and censorship is very weak and those in charge with the cleansing of the libraries and bookshops are mostly semi-illiterate, unable to draw out an official paper, never mind a book-selection. The man in charge with the Agitation and Propaganda selection of the Central Committee helps those from the territory concerning the problem of the libraries telling than “from 1500 volumes it is better to size down to 500 good ones than to remind a number of fascist books”¹⁶. Then “the cultural activity is taking place mostly by force because the workers do not feel a great attachment or interest”¹⁷ while “in Sibiu one single politically prepared man cannot found”¹⁸.

The 1945 propagandist’s simplicity is best revealed in the Alba-Iulia representative’s answer who considered that “our radios do not receive Moscow’s radio signal because they are German apparatus”¹⁹.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, passim.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 55.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 20.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 24.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 66.

It is not difficult to notice that in order for propaganda to work, it must respond to a number of conditions. First of all, it depends on the existence of the factories where, it depends on the level of culture of those targeted (the intellectuals, the artistic medium, the most of the traditional voters of the historical parties do not seem at least impressed by the communist's propagandistic efforts. Neither on the rural country propaganda hits the target.

Being on a pioneering stage there are a lot a mistakes due to the small number of people involved in propaganda and the low cultural level of those involved. They also didn't take into consideration the specific issues of every area: the existence of the minorities, the urban or rural population ration, age differences or educational level.

During this stage of the process we cannot talk about a unitary system in the development of the propaganda. Each Regional office constituted its Agitprop Department on a different date (there are cases in which there no more than a month from the constitutive date to the Congress).

Another problem, raised by only a few of those present, is the small number of party members. When, in our area you have no more than 10 members, it is virtually impossible to designate a section in charge with propaganda and to expect positive results (for example, Oradea had only 7 party members)²⁰.

The intellectual and ideological levels of the members constitute another major obstacle. They usually do not understand themselves the content of the papers, so it is most difficult for them to explain it to the others. "Well-appreciated comrades say <<Long live Our National Democratic Communist Party>> or they mistake the term <<fascist>> with <<falseist>>"²¹. It is also noticeable a lack of interest for this over intellectualized aspect of the matter, many considering that they do not need to read to read more information, inner quality of party member being sufficient.

The lack of concrete rules sent from the top of the propaganda also lead to chaos, each member acting the way he/she considered best. The propagandistic role models were taken from the Russians, processed on the capital and sent into the territory. This is the reason why the 1945 propaganda was a hybrid, not too many people being able to adopt it according to the area and population because the propaganda was based on an absurd principle: the competition among the areas propaganda is most likely to success (Prahova and Valea Jiului where the population is mostly made of workers) than the others (Moldavia, considered to be a Jewish controlled area).

In Moldavia, greatly affect by epidemics, there could not be organized either the most successful demonstrations: "because of the typhoid fever, 30% of the population is sick and 60% is dying of hunger due to evacuations"²². Another problem area – the Northern Transylvania was still under Soviet's occupation.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 149.

²¹ *Ibidem*, f. 67.

²² *Ibidem*, f. 62.

That's the reason why the Bolshevik authorities are not always on the same page with the Romanian communist representatives; "It depends on the Russian commander, on what kind of man he is. In some places there are two lines: our and theirs. There are places where the Party is forbidden by the Russian commander and there are so other places where the Party is founded by the Russian authorities"²³. That's how we assist to the foundation of an autonomous Party, later dissolved due to its political line"²⁴. Other shortcomings observed and discussed by the territorial representatives were the sectarianism and the neglect of duty.

The approach of the minorities was also wrong; the Party's demonstrations took a chauvinistic turn more than once. This happened mostly because, when sent into the territory the guiding lines were not adjusted on the reality: the Hungarians and the Jews have a different set of nations which touches their souls and minds, not the nation or country. On the local level there are also some mistakes made by sending Romanian propagandists in to minority land, in many occasion resulting open conflicts. The same wrong concept is applied in the village where propagandists dressed in suites came and tell the peasants how to work their fields.

The other segments of society where propaganda didn't work were the army and the intellectuals, so during that year and through 1946 there were numerous debates on how they can target these categories.

How a communist newspaper should book like

By far, the most interesting moment of this conference is Ilie Zaharia's report about how a newspaper should be organized and how an article should be written. His guiding lines and solution will be put into practice for a very long time in the communist press.

Starting from Lenin's idea that "a newspaper is not only an agitator and a propagandist, but also a collective organized"²⁵, three directions for a newspaper evolution were established: it should be an agitator, an organizer and an instrument for spreading the ideology. As an agitator it must mobilize the masses, involve them in the social and political life, "to show certain facts"²⁶. As an instrument for spreading ideology it must underline the Party's political line and explain the social issues for the masses, make Soviet Union known. And finally, as an organizer, it must show how certain action should be done within unions and factories.

"Pravda" is used as a model, through Romania is yet to be a socialist state. "Our newspaper must not be only a Party's newspapers targeting only our people, but an open one from the masses addressing to all social classes (...). Apart from the political issues, the Union's life, the peasants' life it must also contain all the important news for an average person, taken from the street – this is a complete newspaper"²⁷.

²³ *Ibidem*, f. 83.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 69.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 90.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 91.

Maybe even more important for the success of the Party promoted campaigns, is that, the communist press to counteract the newspapers which they do not own or they have no control over. And going from theory to practice, we come across the same example: "The New Moldavia" from Iași. The time table of the editorial staff must follow certain steps. In the morning they talk about the yesterday's paper, criticizing the shortcomings, omission and mistakes in comparison with other newspaper. It is imperative for the newspaper's success that the political errors should be corrected. After all these aspects are covered, the editorial staff starts the effecting planning: 1) What do they want to include in the newspaper; 2) What is the subject for the master editorial; 3) Which are the articles which will make the newspaper. To complete these main issues, the newspaper will also contain news, correspondences, chronicles, different topics.

„We must try our best for the newspaper to look as pleasant and artistic as possible. If we fail in this, the readers will not come to us, even if our newspaper would be the most politically correct, so the editor of the newspaper should provide with a variety of topics, find clichés to put in the paper”²⁸.

The titles, because of their great impact on the readers, must be carefully chosen, not too short but also not too extended. "We need <<revolver-type titles>>, (...). If the title describes exactly what the article is all about, there the article becomes uninteresting. The title should go around the article, not too revealing, but neither uncoordinated with the article”²⁹.

“Pieces of advice for a good article”

The most important thing for an article to be easily read and also to imprint a feeling, a sensation, an idea, is to meet these three conditions: to be clear, precise (without intellectualized phrases with a clear style, grammatically correct), new (concrete date, without long, meaningless phrases, the verb should not be repeated) and personal (to be appealing and convincing)³⁰.

“We should learn from Lenin's way of writing. To be able to write a good article you should know what it that you want is. You must focus on a thesis; make a plan, decide on the most important issues”³¹. It is mostly unlikely that such a plan was followed. Than, the editorial staff must move to a different stage: the reading outland, the reading of the article and the final confirmation of the article.

The most remarkable thing is that the pieces of advice (when it is not exaggerated – Lenin the only role-model) are extremely accurate even nowadays (for example: “One article must not contain every peace of information that we have”³²).

The feature-reports follow another pattern: short phrases which are meant to characterize the main feature of the feature- report's subject, without unnecessary description, general frame. Then it must be easy to read (using a distinct

²⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 93.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 94.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *Ibidem*, f. 95.

style, being fragmented by “attractive, well-found subtitles”³³ and the title must be “an entire sentence with subject and verb”³⁴. For the article of a polemic nature, it is suggested that the writer should avoid the curses (for example: “down with him”) and instead find arguments to support their hypothesis.

Ivașcu’s speech is also about the wording of a newspaper on this occasion. Those present at the Conference are being taught how to page a newspaper in order to get the attention of a potential reader. The subtitles prove to be as important as the paging. The pieces of information should not be directly exposed, but embellished in order to appeal to the readers (especially when the subject is a biography). If the article benefits from photos, those should be displayed according to a set of rules: “The clichés should not be crossed, meaning they should not be placed on two adjacent columns, should not touch their corners, meaning that two subtitles should not be put side by side on the same line”³⁵.

The financial aspect of propaganda

The most interesting aspect of propaganda is the financial one. Each speaker asks for various materials (newspapers, booklets, placard or portraits) advice, support but none is speaking about money. Even if only 10% of the actions have been taking place and a considerable amount of money would have been spent. So, the question remains: why don’t they ask for money? They do not dare to or is their funding sufficient? Reading between the lines, from Novicov’s report (“The New Moldavia”) we can understand that one way of putting money ... were the public collections. Apart from him, none of the other speakers does ask for money or mention where the funding came from.

Nevertheless, before the 6th of March when the communists catch the power, we can pinpoint some of their money sources: public collections, donations and last but not least the funds generated by their own enterprises. These, only in Târgu Neamț, the Patriotic Defence had created and administered a bunch of enterprises: a butcher’s shop, a bakery, a distribution shop, a mill and a canteen with cheap food for the workers and „one free meal for military men, representatives and workers in need”³⁶.

The conference in July 1945

Even if, unlike the first conference, some of the territorial offices had made small progress, the general tendency is towards down (not so much regarding the propagandistic activities but mostly regarding its impact over the population). Since January but, overtaken by enthusiasm, the territorial representatives declared false or half-true facts and numbers.

What is certain is the fact that, the communists comment on and justify their own propaganda and only on rare occasion they compare it with what at the time they called “counterpropaganda” (the historical party’s propaganda).

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 96.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 97.

³⁶ M.N.I.R., fond *Muzeul Partidului*, nr. inv. I. 20.337.

During the conference in July some voices can be heard, voices that inform the comrades from Bucharest that the people willingly participate at communist manifestations but they do it for fun, mostly to enjoy the artistic part of the program, not driven by communist ideals.

At the same time, the territorial representatives came with a long list of suggestions (meaning that “they did their homework during the past 6 month showing a much better understanding of the problem and able to adopt the official set of rules to the realities found the field (as an example, the propaganda materials are distributed for free over the war-damaged areas because the population there could not pay for them).

From the Propaganda’s point of view, the novelty of cinema was a failure for two reasons: there are not too many movies to show and those in Russian are not too appealing for the public. Although the movies were brought to the public’s attention by all propagandistic tools: newspapers, wall-papers, street papers, through loud-speakers and in all mass organizations, the audience were low”³⁷.

The name of the movie	Production	Audience*
“Broadway, the street of luck”	American	5029
“Alexander Newsky”	Russian	2756
“When a woman says no”	American	3890
“Petrograd 1917”	Russian	2454

* The number of spectators in the same cinema theatre during a week or

The name of the movie	Production	Audience*
“When a woman says no”	American	3874
“the children of Leningrad”	Russian	2532
“The last meeting”	American	4460
“Kutuzov, 1812”	Russian	2456

But, there were more than a few documentaries (the demonstrations for the first and 9th of May have been filmed) which had a considerable amount of success when show in the factories, “although they were of quite poor quality”³⁸.

The village population (mainly in Transylvania) remain still extremely receptive to Maniu’s name and it is considered a possible saboteur for the government’s action if not controlled. There is also noticeable the fact that the Hungarian population does not embrace the communist cause mainly due to a poor relation with the Romanian population. “Because we didn’t know how to efficiently oppose to Maniu’s campaign,

³⁷ A.N.I.C., fond P.C.M.-Cancelarie, dosar 61/ 1945, f. 56.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 7.

the chauvinism rooted even deeper. And, on the hand, when the problem of Romanian authorities' coming back was brought up, a riot almost started"³⁹. Being on a pioneering stage neither the demonstrations hit the target especially because "they were organized on large masses. There was an abstract work, not a phrased one, so the results were negative after the campaign (...). Approximately 30.000 people took part to the process but the action resembled to a firework party because of the lack of politics involved. The parade ended too late, so the speeches were not delivered in front of the entire audience"⁴⁰.

The cultural level of the members involved did not radically improved (30% of the Alba Iulia Regional Office are illiterate⁴¹). As a bottom line for the intellectual abilities of those involved in propaganda we can quote The Northern Transylvania Regional Office's representative who started that "the majority of propagandists are workers, without great experience but with a lot of prospects"⁴². People don't want to read, many of them can't, anyway. "We are communists. We would die for the Party at any given moment but the books are not for us"⁴³. However there are some propagandists able to perceive the differences, which learned what's important for common folk, where and mainly what to say in a given situation (according to the auditorium, the age and ethnic differences, level of culture and profession etc.). The most profitable locations for propagandists are the crowded places (the courts of justice, markets, common transportation units etc.) and the way in which they could easily get people's attention is by sliding into conversation and convincing the listeners of the righteousness of their cause⁴⁴.

In spite of propaganda, there were still unsuccessful campaigns. Not only that they didn't help, but they also proved to be counter-productive for the Communist Party and caused it the loss of important segments of their voters. When a demonstration takes place, the workers from the factories are mobilized as "a mass" but many of them disappear on their way down to the place of meeting⁴⁵, and the remaining ones do not display the enthusiasm expected by the Party, "some of the slogans which could be enchanted in the past were vigorously applauded while, closer to our days, the slogans were welcomed by a total and obviously hostile silence"⁴⁶. In the villages propaganda maintains a Cinderella's status; the propagandist are to blame for this reality mainly because there wasn't a rigorous selection of those sent to study the communist doctrine, the learning process was too short and superficial and they have only a few teaching materials.

The local press is yet to reach the good it was created for because it does not deal nearly enough with the local realities or the popularization of the Soviet Union. Other two categories unfazed by the communist propaganda are the youth

³⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 37.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 43.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, f. 16.

⁴² *Ibidem*, f. 20.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, f. 54.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 19.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 57.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 61.

and the women (although especially the last category was important thought their roles as daughters, mothers, sisters, wives. They also could influence their husbands, families and other women within the community). Also the intellectuals are a hard to get category and the conferences are not the fastest way to secure their support.

The increased number of "Scântea" sold is one of the few progress made since January (the Unions forced their members to subscribe), but as long as there still were returns, the problem wasn't completely solved. Even worse, those who have them in stock prefer to sell them to the Waste Paper offices for a better payment than ask for a discount. Regarding the paper's own evolution, it's representative announce at the conference that, although the editorial staff is aware of „Scântea”'s importance for the Party, it did not raise to their expectations. „<<Scântea>> is not an average media channel, but the voice behind the Central Committee; it must translate the problems of our time through the guiding lines of our Party's. This it must be the one which spread our Party's and C.C.'s position into the large masses”⁴⁷. The circulation of the newspaper has widened (insufficient!), all the Party's campaigns echoed in it, but the target is yet to be reached. Some of the causes may as well be: the political mistakes (mirrored also by the local press), the lack of materials concerning the local issues, the inequitable treatment for all social categories (the low coverage concerning the youth, women and intellectuals). On the chapter of wishfully thinking for an improvement of „Scântea”'s activity and role in the Romanian publicist picture we can put down: drowning workers towards the editorial staff, finding correspondents in the territory, establishing links with the ministerial offices, improving the technical shortcomings (using high quality paper and ink, explanations for the photos).

The new direction of art expression is not appealing the population. From the „Song for Freedom” cycle, only „The Railway Workers Song” and „Join us ploughmen”⁴⁸ had an impact.

On until this moment there were no mentions of people discontent with the communist party or its politics. For the first time, at this conference, some of the representatives draped hints or even openly spoke about the threats and attacks against the propagandists etc.⁴⁹.

Neither the mass organization had a bigger impact (except ARLUS). The Progressive Youth was incapable to touch their designated target while the Patriots Union was perceived by the population as a fraction of the party which should be avoided. During the conference the reports of „The Patriotic Defence” and „The Antifascist Women Union” representatives` are debated along while the territorial representatives references on the mass organizations` role and efficiently. These two interventions are meant to disclosure the organizations` the goals and objectives. This, the specific target of „The Patriotic Defence” is reaffirmed to help those hit by war (widows, orphans) using the press campaigns and the doctrinaire

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 106.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 56.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 51.

training schools. So, the Department of Press and Publications takes care of the elaboration of the materials for the press and the „Radiojournal” (Radio News) but, apart from “Scântea”, no other newspaper printed the articles. “It’s most likely to publish our articles in <<The Universe>> than in <<Romania Free>>”⁵⁰. There were also 29 doctrinaire schools founded but the impact was low because the public preferred the “cultural” events – sitting, shows and festivals. The communists also had a movie section to display all over the country but the materials (humanly and technically) are insufficient and of a poor quality. On the other hand the theatrical plays shown in the territory are mainly apolitical.

“The Antifascist Women Union” having as a declaimed goal the political and cultural upraising of women, manifested itself using conferences, festivals, evening-dinner, vernissages and press. The organization even tried to print a magazine but it disappeared after the first edition due to the fact that the articles about the Russian women did not appeal the public. They also set as objectives: the creation of a choir to celebrate the 23rd of August, two festivals for a better cooperation between Romanian, and Hungarian then Armenian women. They also hoped to publish an album (“The protection of Women and Children”) and, in honor of soldiers’ return from war, they prepare a festive meal where “a woman speaker will deliver a speech”⁵¹.

Iosif Chişinevschi has the last intervention during the conference and he used it to reaffirm the importance of the tasks they have to achieve in the near future. “Propaganda is a big help for the Party, in order to spread our theories to the masses”⁵² and “The Propagandistic Department, the Party Propaganda has fulfill its fate: to make the Party’s programme and wishes a common good for the people”⁵³.

Accordingly, starting with “Scântea” (“do not believe the rumors”⁵⁴) which was considered a “collective propagandist”⁵⁵, the communist Party needs a more aggressive propaganda for the next segments: the economical legislation, the foreign politics, the fight against speculation, the chauvinism, the problem of the intellectuals, the socialist-democrats and their approach of The Workers United Front, the Russian model, the women and youth. To succeed in this problem they need capable people, a strong organization (a propagandistic department must have a secretary who is approved by the Central Committee; it also must have representatives responsible with the agitation, the press, the cultural work and publishing house). To win this fight, the communist also ask for vigilance (everyone’s past must be minutely scrutinized).

The propagandistic techniques will be learned with the help of the doctrinaire training school. And more, in order to surpass the existing chaos (everybody understood whatever they wanted from propaganda, agitation, agit-

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 95.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, f. 98.

⁵² *Ibidem*, f. 113.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 114.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 128.

prop, and, even worse, each territorial office used their own name to designate the propagandistic department) one single operational system is imposed. "Agitation should deal with the most immediate problems"⁵⁶ (with the help of its two most powerful tools: the slogans and the advertisement) and everyone is lead by Central Committee.

The Mass Organization do not need departments of propaganda⁵⁷, what's unnecessary should be canceled and "not everyone may attend a doctrinaire training school"⁵⁸. Those are some of the last request expressed by the propaganda representative of the Central Committee.

These two mentioned conferences do not approach the Radio issue, through, as propagandist, the radio has even greater impact than the press (a person does not need to know how to read or write in order to listen to a radio show). Maybe that's the reason why on the 23rd of June, the representatives of propaganda organize a new conference where the debates are focuses on this particular issue. "I think we can say that, since we have provided the leadership, the radio broadcasting introduced in its programmes our guiding lines. I believe that we contributed to the general struggle to impose our democratic government and also we were involved in all campaigns. Maybe, in some occasions, we did more than just use our propaganda"⁵⁹, Matei Socor⁶⁰ said also underlining the shortcomings: insufficient technique, the length and variety of the programmes, the unnecessary changing in the programmes due to unimportant matters, the lock of pre-approved material.

"The compressed programme leaves the listener unsatisfied, not to mention those who do not embrace our ideals or even reject them"⁶¹, while the announcers "do not quite rise to the occasion"⁶² (they are incapable to improvise, they lack initiative, they do not notice the errors from the texts they are reading). To correct these shortcoming, the communists created "political orientation courses, a technical and a how to speak on the radio course and also a general education training course" because "it is necessary for the announcers to have at least some technical notions"⁶³. Al. Graur is chosen to lead the political orientation course and Buda to take care of the technical part of the problem⁶⁴.

Those behind the broadcasting boards also need training due to the fact that, when the communists took over the Radio, they removed all the old, experience well-trained professionals.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 114.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 128.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 129.

⁵⁹ A.N.I.C., *fond P.C.M.-Stenograme*, dosar 52/ 1945, f.3

⁶⁰ Matei Socor (1908-1980), president of Composers' Union between 1949 and 1954, traced the ideological line of Romanian music.

⁶¹ A.N.I.C., *fond P.C.M.-Stenograme*, dosar 52/ 1945, f.3

⁶² *Ibidem*, f. 4

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

Because of these shortcomings (of a human and material nature) the Radio activity is slow and difficult; the amateurism of the new comers and the old age of the technical apparatus causing the loss of an important segment of listeners. Even if, driven by enthusiasm when taking over the leadership, the communists ostracized all those who hadn't supported them (considering that they would manage to succeed with whatever they had). Time passing, the lack of specialists appear obvious and the communists start to resort to technicians who are not Party members and even to those known for their different political views.

The Cinematography is the most eloquent example. This department, lead by Helpelin, owns only five functional apparatus for outside projections, has no transportation device, no movies (except soviet productions). They also lack people to translate the films into minorities' languages and they have no control over the projection displayed in the territory. They complain not so much of lack of resources but mostly because their people are incapable to perform their duty⁶⁵. That's the reason why they had to keep the old personnel, "in spite of their political background"⁶⁶ and hire other people to watch them in order to clear the movies from "certain things which are not consistent with the programme"⁶⁷.

Understanding the powerful impact of the seventh art over people, Chişinevschi concludes: „Our comrades who work at the movies must start thinking of the objectives that should be filmed, films about the Romanian life, optimistic movies in order to transform this opportunity into a powerful tool of propaganda for the masses. Being understood that, this is a Party obligation"⁶⁸.

The three meetings of the people involved in propaganda in 1945 set the frame for us in understanding the magnitude, content and impact of this phenomenon on our society level. The communist party was not backed up by people, so they greatly needed more supporters. On the other hand it was an illegitimate party, more of the reason why, helped by propaganda, they try to falsify the past to benefit the present by enforcing new terminology: "the popular will", "constitutional factor". Also, in order to get over their illegitimate status, the communist used some prominent figures from cultural, technical and educational fields to legitimize their regime. We can also notice that a new trend is set, that of "labels" and a new language is invented to project an idyllic fragmentary image from time to time with pejorative remarks against the enemy.

A new set of words was taking over, ubiquitous in all fields from official documents to press and even literature: justice, freedom, democracy, people, righteousness (each of these words was redefined after the 6th of March 1945). Also, the communist adopted some new themes which were spread across Romania by press, radio, and cinema: the theme of purification, the brotherhood of workers

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 20.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 23

and peasants, the will of the people and the theme of gratitude (towards the communist leadership or the U.R.S.S.), the continuous siege theme or the patriotic duty⁶⁹.

By intuition, the communists sensed the value of a well-organized propaganda and they used a lot of their energy to make it work. Although flawed, deficient and unclear, the communists' propaganda was an important tool in consolidating their leadership, a tool that they would refine during the following years.

Apart from a poor quality of those involved in propaganda, the year 1945 established the most important principles of it. The communists understood that their only chance to win over the masses was to dilute their ideology in order to be easily understandable and acceptable for the common folk, and to use the mass organizations to enforce that ideology. People were generally scared of the communists but they would go to an A.P. or U.P. demonstration.

Then, during 1945 they will learn that one track propaganda stood no chance of success, so they chose to diversify the themes, methods and last but not least they delivered their speeches according to the auditorium, the level of culture, the specific issues of the area where they spoke.

Also, they learned "on the spot" how to make efficient propaganda according to the particular event: official announcements ("we must take into consideration the importance of an official announcement"⁷⁰) or discretion until the moment is right (they were to wait for the perfect moment to implement certain measures).

If in 1945 the most important communist feasts (the first of May the 8th of May, the 23rd of August) did not benefit from a coherent structure (except the 7th of November), starting with 1946 we can notice how the Party perfected their propagandistic machinery to the smallest detail and diversified the themes according to the event.

1945 – ÎNCEPUTURILE PROPAGANDEI COMUNISTE INSTITUȚIONALIZATE

- Rezumat -

Manifestări cu caracter propagandistic au avut loc și în cursul anului 1944, dar ponderea și amploarea lor au fost minime. Principalele cauze pot fi considerate, pe de o parte numărul mic de membri ai Partidului Comunist, lipsa specialiștilor, lipsa unei direcții ideologice bine definite, iar de cealaltă parte, o activitate propagandistică mult mai bine pusă la punct a partidelor istorice.

Începând cu anul 1945, asistăm la o ofensivă în forță a propagandei comuniste, generată atât de evoluția politică a României, cât și de perfecționarea celor implicați în acest fenomen.

⁶⁹ Vezi Flori Stănescu, *6 martie: noul limbaj politic*, în „Arhivele totalitarismului”, an IV, nr. 2 – 3/ 1996.

⁷⁰ A.N.I.C., fond C.C. al P.C.R., dosar 11/ 1946, f.3.

Două sunt momentele care fixează cadrul evoluției ulterioare a propagandei politice: prima conferință de propagandă a P.C.R. pe țară (28 ianuarie 1945) și ședința cu responsabili *resoartelor* de „Propagandă și Agitație” a comitetelor județene din întreaga țară (11-14 iunie 1945).

Cele două mari consfătuiri (prima asimilată ulterior cu un congres) pun bazele teoretice ale propagandei și totodată oferă un amplu tablou al evoluției fenomenului propagandistic pe parcursul primei jumătăți a anului 1945. După aceste „ședințe”, toate întrunirile vizând propaganda, chiar dacă nu se legitimează explicit prin ele, mențin aceeași structură și același tip de desfășurare (reprezentanții din teritoriu prezintă un raport privind situația locală, comentat în plen, la care se adaugă: îndrumările celor din minister responsabili cu Agitprop-ul și concluziile mobilizatoare).

Ceea ce frapează, raportându-ne la cele două întruniri din 1945, este desfășurarea (mai curând o involuție) fenomenului și modul în care o percep, atât cei implicați, cât mai ales cei cărora li se adresează. Vorbim de o involuție atâta timp cât interesul, dar mai ales entuziasmul scade vizibil între cele două momente, urmând apoi o revenire la faza inițială. În ianuarie, toți vorbitorii pot și fac totul. În iunie, lucrurile sunt cu mult mai nuanțate. Încep să fie menționate din ce în ce mai mult lipsurile, greutățile și obstacolele pe care le au de depășit. Dacă în prima fază nu există decât câteva zone unde se recunoaște că activitatea propagandei n-a avut succes, șase luni mai târziu lucrurile stau cu totul altfel.

Secția de Propagandă a fost creată la 28 august 1944, dar la aproape cinci luni de la această dată mai existau persoane care nu știau cu ce se ocupă sau nu-și puteau defini corect noțiunile. Se observă că încă de la început se face o delimitare strictă între propagandă și agitație, chiar dacă, odată cu evoluția fenomenului propagandistic, cel de-al doilea termen va fi înglobat în primul. Inițial, în accepția Partidului Comunist „propaganda înseamnă a propăvădui o idee, o concepție, o teorie” în timp ce „agitația se referă la problemele imediate”.

Este lesne de observat că propaganda pentru a prinde, cât de cât, este condiționată de anumiți factori: mesaj clar (oamenii sunt mai receptivi la lucrurile pe care le înțeleg), gradul de cultură al receptorului, disponibilitatea lui de a crede etc.

Au existat categorii sociale prea puțin impresionate de eforturi propagandistice ale Partidului Comunist: intelectualii, lumea artistică, electoratul tradițional al partidelor istorice. De altfel nici la sate propaganda nu are impactul dorit.

Fiind într-o etapă de pionerat greșelile apar permanent, fiind cauzate de numărul prea mic de persoane implicate în propagandă, dar și de gradul scăzut de cultură al celor înregimentați. Apoi nu se ține cont de specificul zonei unde se desfășoară propaganda: existența minorităților, ponderea populației urbane sau rurale, media de vârstă, nivelul de școlarizare.

În această fază nu se poate vorbi de un sistem unitar de desfășurare a propagandei. Fiecare Regională și-a constituit Resortul de Agitprop la date diferite (existând cazuri în care de la data constituirii până la Congres nu trecuse nici o lună de zile).

O altă problemă pe care o atacă doar puțini dintre cei prezenți este cea a numărului mic de membri de partid. Nivelul, atât intelectual, cât și ideologic, este un alt mare obstacol. Ei nu înțeleg nici pentru ei ce scrie în documentele venite de la centru, cum să mai explice și altora? Totodată este vizibil și un dezinteres pentru acest aspect prea „intelectualizat”, mulți considerând că nu e nevoie să mai citească deoarece calitatea de membru de partid suplinește informația.

Lipsa unor directive concrete de la forul conducător al propagandei a dus și ea la dezorganizare, fiecare făcând munca de agitație și propagandă așa cum a crezut el că este mai bine. Modelele propagandistice erau preluate de la sovietici, prelucrate puțin la centru și trimise apoi în teritoriu. Din această cauză propaganda din 1945 a fost un hibrid, prea puțini știind cum s-o adapteze în funcție de zonă, de oameni, pentru că pornindu-se de la acest principiu absurd al competiției dintre regionale, nu se iau în calcul faptul că sunt zone cu specific (Valea Jiului, Prahova – unde predomină muncitorii și din această cauză sunt șanse mai mari ca propaganda să prindă, decât în Moldova – considerată fief al evreilor; o altă zonă cu probleme – Ardealul de Nord, aflat încă sub ocupație sovietică. Din această cauză, autoritățile bolșevice nu sunt întotdeauna pe aceeași lungime de undă cu reprezentanții Partidului Comunist de la București. Sunt locuri unde Partidul e interzis de comandantul sovietic, iar în alte locuri e înființat de către un comandant sovietic).

Alte lipsuri conștientizate și de cei din teritoriu, și în consecință luate în discuții, au fost: sectarismul și delăsarea. Modul de abordare a minoritarilor reprezintă o altă mare greșală, luând naștere nu de puține ori manifestări șovine. Și asta pentru că atunci când s-au transmis în teritoriu directivele, nu s-a luat în calcul realitatea, că etnicii germani și maghiari, și chiar evreii, aveau alte noțiuni la care vibrează, nu patrie, națiune. Apoi s-au făcut greșeli pe plan local trimițându-se propagandiști români în comunități ale minoritarilor, nu de puține ori ajungându-se la conflicte deschise. Aceeași problemă apare și la sate, unde „băieții în costum” vin să le explice țăranilor cum să cultive pământul.

Celelalte segmente ale societății unde propaganda nu a prins au fost armata și intelectualii, și de aceea pe parcursul anului, și mai ales în 1946 vor exista numeroase discuții, la nivelul forurilor conducătoare, despre modul în care și-i pot apropia pe aceștia.

Întrunirile oamenilor implicați în desfășurarea propagandei din anul 1945, ne dau măsura amploarei, conținutului și impactului acestui fenomen la nivelul societății. Partidul Comunist n-avea suport de mase și de aici nevoia acută de a atrage oamenii, de a-i influența și determina să-i sprijine. Apoi era un partid lipsit de legitimitate, motiv pentru care, prin intermediu propagandei, se încearca falsificarea trecutului în beneficiul prezentului, prin introducerea unor noi termeni: „voință populară”, „factor constituțional”. Tot pentru a depăși deficitul de legitimitate se apela la cooptarea unor personalități ale culturii, tehnicii, învățământului care să gireze regimul. Apare și o nouă modă, cea a etichetelor, și un nou limbaj, prin intermediul căruia se proiecta o imagine idilică segmentată când și când cu expresii depreciative la adresa dușmanului.

Intuind perfect valoarea unei propagande bine făcute, comuniștii își consumau o mare parte din energie în acest sector. Cu toate impreciziile, confuziile, neclaritățile inerente oricărui început, încă din 1945 se întrevede o direcție pe care au urmat-o și perfecționat-o în anii ce au urmat.