

# Institutional Practices of Propaganda in Nicolae Ceaușescu's Regime

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this study is to analyse the link between the evolution of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation and the evolution of the internal and foreign policy in the Nicolae Ceausescu regime. Could the communist propaganda system be simply a bureaucratic construct that created an artificial speech? If not, what would be the connection between the institutional practices of propaganda and the evolution of the regime? In order to answer these questions I used, in particular, archival documents from The National Archives of Romania and the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party Fund from the Department of Propaganda and Agitation. My analysis follows two key moments related to the reorganizations of the Central Institution of Propaganda from the years 1968 and 1973. In this respect, I analyse the changes imposed on these institutions and their connection with the internal and the external context of the regime.*

**Keywords:** *propaganda, propagandist, institutional practices, communism, television.*

The organization of internal and external propaganda in communist Romania involved the existence of an administrative staff that operated both vertically and horizontally. This mechanism was organised and supported by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Party. Territorial divisions were coordinated by the Department of Propaganda and Agitation. This Department was one of the main components of the Central Committee since its establishment.

The premise of this study is that the changes in the internal and external politics of Nicolae Ceausescu's regime were also reflected in the institutional practices. The institutional construction in a communist regime is one of the most important elements in maintaining the perennality of the regime. In this respect, I believe that the system of communist propaganda was not just a bureaucratic construct that created an artificial speech. To create and administrate such a complex system, it required was necessary a permanent care for reevaluation, an effort of perfecting and educating the staff, and the development of specific mechanisms.

From this perspective, the aim of this study is to emphasize the transformation of the institutional practices of propaganda during Ceaușescu's regime and the ways in which those changes reflected the vision of political power. This study will focus on two key moments in the development of the central institution of propaganda: 1968 and 1973, in order to reveal the link between those institutional transformations and the development of the vision and the action of the political power towards society. The main questions that I intend to answer are: how would the political directives be reflected in the transformation and the dynamic of the propaganda institution? And if there is a reflection of that political direction, what would that be?

The study is mainly based on archival material, more exactly the Central Historical National Archives from Bucharest, the fund of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. In addition, I also used literature regarding the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu.

In Romania historiography there are some important studies about the institutional construction of the communist regime, such as the study of Nicoleta Ionescu Gura.<sup>1</sup> However, the analysis is centered on the early days of the regime. Some considerations about the propagandistic mechanism of the communist regime in Romania are mentioned in the book of Cristian Vasile, *Politicile culturale comuniste în timpul regimului lui Gheorghiu Dej*.<sup>2</sup> I would thus like to mention the studies of Eugen Denize and Cezar Măță<sup>3</sup>, Tiberiu Troncotă<sup>4</sup>, and Verzea Mihaela Cristina<sup>5</sup>. All these studies and a few others analyze the institution of propaganda only in its early years in the context of the regime's instauration.

From a post-revisionist perspective, Larissa Zakharova<sup>6</sup>, analyze the institutional practices of the communist regime as a strategy of communication and a social engineering technique from its

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<sup>1</sup> Nicoleta Ionescu-Gura, *Nomenclatura Comitetului Central al Partidului Muncitoresc Român*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Cristian Vasile, *Politicile culturale comuniste în timpul regimului lui Gheorghiu-Dej*, (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Denize Eugen, Măță Cezar, *România comunistă. Statul și propaganda. 1948-1953*, (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Troncotă Tiberiu, *România Comunistă. Propagandă și cenzură*, (Bucharest: Editura Tritonic, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Verzea Mihaela Cristina, *Partidul-Stat. Structuri politice. 1948-1965*, (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Larissa Zakharova, *La communication Totalitaire, une technique d'ingénierie sociale*, [laviedesidees.fr](http://www.laviedesidees.fr) (<http://www.laviedesidees.fr/La-communication-totalitaire-une.html>).

perspective to create identities. From this point of view I will start my own analysis. Beyond the technical or logistic development there is a social and ideological reason. In order to achieve its purpose, the institutional practices reflected not only the visions of the political authorities, but, also the requirements of society. Therefore the developments of the mechanisms of propaganda were related to the development of society.

### 1. A New Perspective on Propaganda: 1968

Even if the changing of leadership occurred in 1965<sup>7</sup>, a real change in the central Department of Propaganda was made in 1968. Several internal and external factors led to the decision of reforming the institution in that year. A first determining factor was the internal and the external contexts that involved a special evolution of the communist regime in Romania. Therefore, 1967 was the beginning of a diplomatic and economic opening for Romania, which started to develop relationships with Western Europe and the US. In 1967, Nicolae Ceausescu was the first East European leader who initiated diplomatic relations with West Germany<sup>8</sup>. In addition, a few days before the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops in Prague, Ceausescu visited Prague to show its support to Alexander Dubcek. Ceausescu did not send troops to Czechoslovakia. On the contrary, he denounced this act publicly. On August 23, the Grand National Assembly held (maybe use the word “discussed?”) the official position of Romania to these events. Because the information on the possible reaction of the Romanian army of the Soviet Union were contradictory, at that time Ceausescu had a meeting with the Yugoslav leader Joseph Broz Tito, to check his willingness to provide help to Romania in with the case of a Russian invasion<sup>9</sup>. As a result of this event,

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<sup>7</sup> Until 1965, the Department of Propaganda and Agitation suppose (?) almost the same organizational structure. A different situation was in early of the 1950s, when the regime needed to establish its principles and institutions. For more information on this subject, see Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, *The Nomenclature of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006). (Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, *Nomenclatura CC al PMR*, Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Also in this context, in June 1973, Ceausescu visited West Germany for five days and he was the first leader from Eastern Europe to do so.

<sup>9</sup> Adrian Cioroianu, *On the Shoulders of Marx. An introduction to the History of Romanian Communism* (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2005), p. 409. (Adrian Cioroianu, *Pe*

but also in other speeches and actions that followed, the Romanian leader contradicted the Brezhnev doctrine, insisting on the right of the socialist countries to decide their own path in domestic affairs. At that time, Romania was already having a special situation comparing with other socialist countries, as there were no Soviet troops in Romania and any maneuvering troops of the Warsaw Pact.

A second important factor was the territorial division of the country by introducing a new administrative-territorial structure, similar to that of the interwar period. The territorial and administrative reorganization of the country from December 1967 imposed some institutional transformations, too. The hidden proposal of this transformation was the fusion between political and state power. The propagandistic speech set out the decentralization policy and the public participation in economic and administrative decisions. But the intention to construct the party-state, and the accumulation of power in one single hand was revealed in 1967, at the moment when Nicolae Ceaușescu became head of the state<sup>10</sup>. At the same time, the structure of the central and local party assumed the direct responsibility for: problems of national defense, national security, foreign policy, personnel selection, and cultural problems. Meanwhile, the state institution has assumed direct responsibility for the economic policy, but accepted the guidance of the Central Committee for all the decisions<sup>11</sup>.

The reorganization of the propaganda system met the strategic plan designed to operate over a long period. In this regard, two changes in the propaganda system proved this role in the domestic and foreign policy. The administrative and territorial reorganization of the country led to a re-evaluation of the territorial network of propaganda. The new changes led to a greater control over the territorial network and a faster route of information. The role played by propaganda in August 1968 demonstrated the existence of a well-defined strategy to capture the public support regarding that decision. Regarding foreign policy, the creation of a Commission of Foreign Propaganda in the Propaganda Department reveals the emphasis of the political leadership on this

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*umerii lui Marx. O introducere în istoria comunismului românesc*, Bucharest: Editura Curtea Veche, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> In 1965 he was designated General Secretary of the Party and in the 1967 he assumed the role of Chairman of the State Council.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Burton, *Radio and Television Broadcasting in Eastern Europe*, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1974), p. 322.

dimension. The August 1968 moment increased the popularity of the new leader and helped the development of the cult of personality.

A visible transformation in this respect was changing the name of the institution. Until 1968, the name of the institution was The Department of Propaganda and Agitation. In 1965, the group of agitators attached to the Central Committee was abolished. The agitation activity was seen as an activity specific to villages, where people had minimal education and needed a simple explanation about communist ideas. In 1965, the management of the propaganda department found that the system was mature enough to spread communist ideas only through the work of propaganda. At the same time, people knew that a better political regime and its vision would be realized only through the work of propaganda. However, the change of the political vision was visible only in 1968, when the Institution changed its name to "The Department of Propaganda"<sup>12</sup>.

Regarding the organization of the central section, the number of officials was the same, but two new sectors were created: the Sector of Propaganda and Social Sciences and the Sector on Foreign Propaganda. For the first one, the motivation was clear: the subordination of the social sciences to the political power. Social sciences were considered key to get to people's conscience, and for that reason, it could be an useful instrument of propaganda. In that way, the political leadership could better control the activity and the research of the social sciences.

The central structure of the Department of Propaganda tried to include only what they called "political propaganda". The Media Sector was organized separately from that of Propaganda. The new Propaganda Department included five sectors: Propaganda and Social Sciences, The Sector of Lecturers, The Documentation Sector, The Sector of Mass Political Work, and The Sector of Foreign Propaganda. In addition, there was a group of territorial instructors dealt with cadres. Along with the technical employees and the librarians, it reached a total

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<sup>12</sup> I should mention that in the URSS, the same name, "The Department of Propaganda," was used in the period 1966-1970. Could that be the reason why the Romanian leadership changed the name of the Romanian central propaganda institution, too? The motivation of the URSS leadership, as that expressed by Ceausescu, was the need to modernize the system of propaganda and to accommodate a bigger audience. (Ellen Mickiewicz, *The Modernisation of Party Propaganda in the URSS*, in „Slavic Review”, vol.30, nr.2/1971, p. 260)

of 52 posts<sup>13</sup>. A first observation can be outlined regarding the creation of the new Sector of Lectures. A lecturer was a better qualified propagandist. The creation of a special Sector for them outlines one more time the development of the propaganda system. Therefore, on the one hand, one may observe a decline of the importance of the agitators and their activity. On the other hand, there was an increase in the importance of the lecturer and of the much more complex method of propaganda.

Regarding the local organisation, a first step was to create the existence of the interim county party committees, but in the autumn of 1968 they were functioning permanently<sup>14</sup>. The local party apparatus was formed by county and municipal party committees, party committees for the town: category I and II, and communal committees. In each local party structure there was a Department of Propaganda.

The communal committee was functioning only with the Organizational Department and the Commission for Propaganda and Culture. The head of this commission was also deputy secretary and also held the position of director of the cultural center. There were a total of 15-25 posts<sup>15</sup>.

The town Party committees that belonged to category II had a commission of propaganda and party education, with a total of 10-15 posts<sup>16</sup>. For the municipal party committees belonging to the first category, there were a total of 20-25 posts for: the Commission for Propaganda and Mass Politics and the Labour Party Cabinet<sup>17</sup>. The Propaganda Department of Municipal Party Committee had two commissions: the Commission for Propaganda and Mass Political Work, whose chief was one of the secretaries of the municipal committee. There was a total of 20-30 posts<sup>18</sup>. A total of 20-30 posts were made available.

The Propaganda Department of the County Committee was organised as follows: the Sector of Mass Political Work, the Commission

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<sup>13</sup> *The Organigram of the Department of Propaganda*, in National Central Historical Archives, fund of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, file no. 3/1968, page 260. (*Organigrama Secției de Propagandă*, în Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, fond CC al PCR, Secția Cancelarie, dosar nr. 3/1968, f. 260).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, page 223.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, page 223.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, page 246.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, page 244.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, page 242.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, page 236.

for The Press, print and radio(s), and the Party Cabinet. This meant a total of 32-51 positions<sup>19</sup>. The new scheme was improved with 6 posts: one for the chief of a Sector and five for instructors. One of the issues that followed the organization of the local party committees was related to the reduction of a number of positions. Until the autumn of 1968, the Department of Municipal Party Committee Propaganda was forced to cut 21 activists from its team, including six instructors for art and cultural issues, one for the propaganda committee and mass political work and 14 from the party offices. The Town Party Committees, which belonged to the first class, lost 8 posts in the field of propaganda: 3 from the Committee for Mass Political Work and 5 from the Party Offices<sup>20</sup>.

Following these changes, to verify that the new instructions were implemented and whether the system worked efficiently, a meeting of the territorial instructors was organized in March 1968. I believe that this meeting was an important one which reflected both the position of the political leadership in society and the role played by propaganda. Analysing the stenogram of their discussion, it can be concluded that in the beginning, all those organisational changes that were made did not come with substantial changes in the propaganda rethoric. For example, the inspector assigned to the Satu Mare region stated that the main complaints of the people were related to the poor state of the roads, factories, hospitals and other problems related to the administration system. The recommendation for the instructors in this region was: "propaganda has to make people understand that all these problems will be resolved, but not instantly. This will take time, but it should not be a reason for people to lose their trust in the power of the party"<sup>21</sup>. The statement made by this propaganda instructor reinforces the idea that political power was truly interested in propaganda efficiency in the

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, page 231.

<sup>20</sup> *The Decision on Changing the Schemes of the functioning in the Local Party*, in National Central Historical Archives, fund of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, file no. 83/1968, pages 2, 3. (*Hotărâre privind modificarea schemelor de funcțiuni ale organelor locale de partid*, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, Secția Cancelarie, dosar nr. 83/1968, ff. 2, 3.

<sup>21</sup> *The Verbatim report from 1 march 1968 with the teritorial instructors*, National Central Historical Archives, fund of Central Comitee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section of Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 1/1968, page 4. (*Stenograma ședinței de raportare ale instructorilor teritorialii din 1 martie 1968*, în ANIC, fond CC la PCR, Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr.1/1968, f. 4).

territory and the propaganda instructors had the possibility to speak about the realities from the country. Just to affirm, even in an indirect way, that people might lose their confidence in the party, was important

From the beginning of that meeting, the propaganda instructors were asked to submit "some other important issues of their work, not just the issues concerning their cultural and mass political work"<sup>22</sup>. What are these "other important issues" during the meeting on mass political work? Could that be an impulse for territorial instructors to leave formal discussions, which were often criticized? What is the reason of this change of attitude and how did the political power perceive the direct confrontation with real issues affecting people? I believe that, more than ever, at that time particular attention was paid to the people's reaction to political activity. Reports of the territorial instructors proved this. They bring to light facts and criticisms that had not been said before. This is reinforced by the use of propaganda during the August 1968 moment. Nicolae Ceaușescu's speech in 1968 was popularized by every tool that the propaganda system had at the time. Thus, the echo of this event was amplified by all means of communication, a long time after the passing of the event. The observation made by Irina Gridan, in an article dedicated to this moment, responds to this idea. According to Gridan, Nicolae Ceaușescu's speech reproduced in „Scînteia” (The Spark) and on television was followed by a focus on people's perceptions of the political power and not vice versa, as it had been the case before. The political power seemed to be very interested in the manner in which the people perceived this speech<sup>23</sup>.

Regarding the communication between political power and society, one can notice a break in the tradition of totalitarian communication. Adrian Cioroianu reinforces this idea by stating that the population was not convened, but informed and persuaded to participate<sup>24</sup>. The context in which the people mobilized is also important, as they were already prepared for the demonstration on August 23rd. In the photos from those times, one can notice that only placards with messages for Czechoslovakia looked improvised<sup>25</sup>. We

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, page 1.

<sup>23</sup> Irina Gridan, *Les communistes roumain face à l'été 1968. Strategies discursives et scenographies mobilisatrice*, in "Hypothèses", Paris, (nr. 1/2010), p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> A. Cioroianu, *Ce Ceaușescu qui hante les Roumains*, (Bucharest: Curtea Veche), p. 154.

<sup>25</sup> Irina Gridan, *Les communistes roumain face à l'été 1968. Strategies discursives et scenographies mobilisatrice*, in "Hypothèses", Paris, (nr. 1/2010), p. 41.



should note that the some opinion and position regarding the events in Czechoslovakia began to be made public through a series of articles in the newspaper "The Spark" between the months of July-August. The main point that emerges from these articles is not related to Romania's position regarding the Czechoslovak reform program, but to support the idea that the Communist Party in any country has the right to solve in its own way any internal problem that could arise:"in our opinion, when there are differences of opinion on an issue or another, those differences should be solved through friedly discussion, with patience and understanding coming from each party and each leadership, in a constructive way, listening to the voice of reason and to the interests of the people in the socialist countries"<sup>26</sup>. Ceausescu's balcony speech was broadcast live by the state television, which had a more powerful impact. [That impact was reinforced by the free and fervent speech]. The enthusiasm and frenezy of the population, at least during the speech, were clearly visible and and seemed sincere.

Returning to the meeting of the propgandistic instructors from March 1968, it can be observed that it has brought into disscution the issue of the propagandists. In has been observed that some propagandists of the Propaganda Department of the County Office Party gave up their post, returning to their former jobs as teachers. Their motivation was officially reported as "dissatisfaction from their activity"<sup>27</sup>. That meant too much responsibility, the low payment (sometimes lower than the educational staff payment), and the difficulty of being promoted. This request for the promotion aims at a better payment, not necessarily a higher social status. The wages increased after some time, but not significantly. The issue of remuneration has always been a problem of the system. I assume that this dissatisfaction, specific to the year 1968 was mainly linked to the financial side. A second motivation was the moral and the intellectual dissatisfaction. It

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<sup>26</sup> Nicolae Ceausescu's speech during a visit in Prague on August 17, "Spark", year XXXVIII, no. 7797, 17 Aout 1968, page 2. (*Cuvântarea lui Nicolae Ceaușescu cu ocazia vizitei de la Praga din 17 august*, în "Scântea", anul XXXVIII, nr. 7797, 17 august 1968, p. 2).

<sup>27</sup> *The Verbatim report from 1 march 1968 with the teritorial instructors*, National Central Historical Archives, fond of Central Comitee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section of Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 1/1968, page 5. (*Stenograma ședinței de raportare ale instructorilor teritoriali din 1 martie 1968*, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr.1/1968, f. 5).

should be noted that all the propagandists wanted to return to their original job, especially those who were teachers. Therefore, intellectuals who had to do their propagandistic actions had other expectations from this status. In this case, it was not only about the issue of material satisfaction, but also the intellectual expectations. From this point of view, the inefficiency of the propaganda system can be observed from the discontent and mistrust of the propaganda instructors who had an intellectual formation. At this point, the power was confronting a new problem: that of the propagandists who gave up their responsibilities. What would the solution be in this case? How can you shape a better propagandist, who can communicate efficiently with the society? A first solution was designed in financial terms, but the wage increase could not be too high and, as a consequence, the problem persisted. A similar solution was applied in 1965, but it did not work.

A second solution seems to have worked more efficiently, and this was related to the responsibility of propagandist for the work that he submitted to outline this new manner of action, the instructors of propaganda did not receive anymore the propagandistic support (texts, bibliography) from the Central Committee of the Party. Their responsibility increased because of the necessity to construct their own propagandistic discourse and at the end of their actions, they could be blamed for their eventual failure. More than that, the number of propagandists was reduced, in order to keep a better control on improving their quality. In several counties, the party secretaries have complained that the people who were responsible outweighed the number of instructors of propaganda and that the department operating scheme was too weak to cover all the problems they had to solve. Therefore, the regime was facing a problem of confidence presented in the very center of the propaganda system, which affected even more the link between political power and society.

Above all, it can be clearly observed that the aim of the regime was to centralize the foreign propaganda activity by creating the Sector of Foreign Propaganda. Even if there were institutions that had in their responsibility the foreign propaganda, the management intended to create a central institution for a better control of the foreign propaganda. The establishment of this department had an external pulse, because in January 1968, a delegation of the Central Committee of CPSU visited

Romania to check on the evolution of the propaganda system<sup>28</sup>. The main issues they were interested in, were the organization of the party education, the forms of propaganda work, and the topics discussed in the specialized study circles. The external delegation visited the Departments of Central Committee, especially the Department of propaganda, in order to demonstrate the new kind of open diplomacy started by Romania. This is also a reinforcement of the external propaganda<sup>29</sup>.

## 2. The National Path of 1973

In the period between 1968-1973 one can notice a change in the vision of political power to the system of propaganda. Until August 1968, the agents of propaganda disposed much more discretionary power in their actions<sup>30</sup>.

The reorganization in 1973 reflected very well the change of political discourse. After a period of political detente, the July 1971 Thesis imposed a national path in the cultural domain and in the domestic policy. The creation of the Council of Socialist Cultural Education in September 1971 also played a role in the redefinition of some rhetorical trail of the propaganda. The Central Section changed its name in the Department of Propaganda and Press and it was divided into four sectors: The Sector of Propaganda, The Sector of Political and Educational Work, The Sector of Cadres and the Educational Work in Schools and Faculty and Sector of Press, Radio and Television. Along

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<sup>28</sup> *Information*, in National Central Historical Archives, fund of Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section of Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 5/1968, page 4. (*Informare*, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 5/1968, f. 4).

<sup>29</sup> For a better organization in this sector, in 1969 the Foreign Propaganda Commission was created. It was subordinated to the Secretariat of the Central Committee and was led by the party secretary on issues of propaganda at the time, Paul Niculescu Mizil [(*The Proposals for the organization of the Commission of Foreign Propaganda, attached to the RPC*, in National Central Historical Archives, fond of Central Comitee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section of Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 32/1969, page 54. (*Propuneri privind organizarea și activitatea Comisiei de Propagandă Externă, de pe lângă CC al PCR*, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, Secția Cancelarie, dosar nr. 32/1969, f. 54)].

<sup>30</sup> The propagandist had been instructed to decide what the best method and the best discourse was in their activity. All those decisions should reflect the group of people who receive the information.

with these Sectors, there was a group of territorial instructors. From a total of the 75 employed in this section, 63 dealt with political work and 12 with the technical work<sup>31</sup>. An important change can be observed in the composition of this Departement. In this regard, the press activity was included in the Department of Propaganda and there was a special Section for Press, Radio and Television. In this context, the press has been seen like one of the main instruments of propaganda. The educational system and propaganda had to use modern tools in disseminating the information, but without abandoning the classic tool, the propagandist.

Why this change and why in the early 70s? After the July 1971 Thesis, the attention of propaganda was focused on the media, because the path of nationalism was imposed to all artistic areas. For that reason, the means of information were carefully supervised. In those directives the need of improving the activity of the Department of Propaganda was specified<sup>32</sup>.

A second reason was linked with the development of television. Until the early 70s that department of media did not enjoy too much attention from the political power. But in 1972, in a session attended by Nicolae Ceaușescu and the heads of the Department of Propaganda<sup>33</sup>,

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<sup>31</sup> *The Scheme of the Department of Propaganda and Press*, in National Central Historical Archives, fond of Central Comitee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section of Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 73/1973, pages 15, 16. (*Schema Secției de Propagandă și Presă*, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, secția Cancelarie, dosar nr. 73/1973, ff. 15-16).

<sup>32</sup> *The Proposal of measures for the improvement of politico-ideological, for the Marxist-Leninist education of the party members, of all working people*, in „Romania on the Road to Build the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society. Reports, speeches, articles. May 1971-February 1972”, volume 6, Bucharest, 1972, p. 194. (*Propuneri de măsuri pentru îmbunătățirea activității politico-ideologice, de educare marxist-leninistă a membrilor de partid, a tuturor oamenilor muncii. 6 iulie 1971*, în Nicolae Ceaușescu, "România pe drumul onstruirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate. Rapoarte, cuvântări, articole. Mai 1971-februarie 1972", vol. 6, Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1972, p. 194.)

<sup>33</sup> More specifically, Miu Dobrescu, Ion Totu, Lenghel Ladislau, Ion Zahiu, Ion Florea, Ion Dicu, Szabo Alexandru, Piucă Vicențiu, Fotache Petre, Nedelea Marin, Dumitrache Gheorghe, Gheorghe Pană and Dumitru Popescu. (*Minutes of the meeting of Nicolae Ceaușescu with the leadership of Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee of PCR. 8 February 1972*, in National Central Historical Archives, fund of Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section of Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 11/1972, page 2. (*Stenograma întâlnirii tovarășului NC cu conducerea*

Nicolae Ceausescu was alerted to the fact that the development of television made almost impossible a competition between the activity of that institution and propaganda. Upon hearing this, Nicolae Ceausescu commented that the television should not be compete with propaganda, but used it instead<sup>34</sup>. With this short and firm comment, Nicolae Ceausescu indicated the trajectory of Television and of Propaganda, also. Faced with the development of Radio and Television, propaganda could no longer express its control function over them. The creation of other two institutions, the National Council of Radio and the Council of Socialist Culture and Education were not sufficient to control society. That is why the control of the Propaganda Department had to be strengthened. During these meetings, some more problems of the institution of Propaganda were revealed, such as the lack of organisation of the agitatoric actions, due the decision from 1965 to give up the Sectors of Agitators, and the decision from 1968 to stop sending the didactic support for the agitators<sup>35</sup>.

For a better communication between center and periphery, the propaganda system proposed the organisation of the meetings with county secretaries, heads of propaganda departments and editors, two or three times a year. Dumitru Popescu together with other activists from the Council of Education were suggested to attend those meetings.

All those motives led to changes in the organisational scheme of the central institution of propaganda, in order to better reflect the ideological changes<sup>36</sup>. For example, since the 70s, particular importance

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*Secția de Propagandă a CC al PCR.8 februarie 1972, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 11/1972, f. 2)].*

<sup>34</sup> *Minutes of the meeting of Nicolae Ceausescu with the leadership of the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee of PCR. 8 February 1972, in National Central Historical Archives, fond of Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section on Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 11/1972, page 2. (Stenograma întâlnirii tovarășului NC cu conducerea Secției de Propagandă a CC al PCR.8 februarie 1972, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 11/1972, f. 26.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem, pages 2-5.*

<sup>36</sup> *Later, in 1976, the Department of Propaganda and the Press was split in Department of Propaganda and the Department of Press and Radio and Television. [(Protocol No. 11 of the meeting of the RCP Secretariat of day November 29, 1976, in National Central Historical Archives, fond of Central Comitee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section of Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 110/1976, page 2. (Protocol nr.11 al ședinței Secretariatului CC al PCR din ziua de 29 noiembrie 1976, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, secția Cancelarie, dosar nr. 110/1976, f. 2.)]*

was given to the dissemination of propaganda by museums. Increasing the path of nationalism and the desire of the regime to promote the national tradition of the Romanians, the museum has become an ideal tool in this respect. Therefore, in addition to the exchange the experience in this field, some cultural instructors attached to houses of culture and community centers consulted surveys and did some research on the activities of some museums in the West<sup>37</sup>.

More than ever, after the July Theses, Nicolae Ceausescu searched for some tools of legitimation for his vision of leadership. In this way, the Department of Propaganda and Agitation received more responsibility in the guidance of the ideological vision. Each year, the Department of Propaganda and Agitation had the responsibility to develop the programs for the political courses and for the university departments of Marxism-Leninism. The main documents used were the volumes of the RCP programs and the directions of domestic and foreign policy of the Party and the state of the Nicolae Ceausescu regime<sup>38</sup>. This change in the curricula of the party was a consequence of the desire to reinforce what he saw to be the "national power"<sup>39</sup>. Therefore, the bibliographies used by propagandists had to comprise lessons such as: "Problems of organization and management of political, economic and social activities", "The creation of multilateral developed society", "Files of History" and to initiate themes for discussion such as "The International Issues", "Ideological debates"<sup>40</sup>. This memory

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<sup>37</sup> Ioan Jinga, *Cultura de masă*, (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1975), p. 216. (Ioan Junga, *Popular Culture*)

<sup>38</sup> *Politico-ideological education of the party from 1975 to 1979. Issues and bibliographies for guidance in courses and seminars*, (Bucharest, Editura Politică, 1975), page 9. (*Învățământul politico-ideologic de partid 1975-1979. Probleme orientative și bibliografii pentru cursuri și seminarii*, Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975, p. 9).

<sup>39</sup> At this point, Nicolae Ceausescu betrayed the Leninist idea of breaking the national borders and to promote Not sure what you want to say universal values to help create the people's unity. "Nations are the product of the bourgeois epoch in the social development. The develop of the nation broke the capitalist borders, destroyed national seclusion and replaced class antagonism with national antagaonismul". (V. I. Lenine, *Karl Marx et sa doctrine*, Paris, Editions Sociales, 1946 p. 30.) For Nicolae Ceausescu, one national border was necessary and it had to be defended with all costs.

<sup>40</sup> *Politico-ideological education of the party from 1975 to 1979. Issues and bibliographies for guidance in courses and seminars*, (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975), page 9. (*Învățământul politico-ideologic de partid 1975-1979. Probleme orientative și bibliografii pentru cursuri și seminarii*, Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975, p. 9).

handling by communist ideology through propaganda was possible thanks to the intervention of the ideology, using tools like the Department of Propaganda and Agitation, in the process of creation of identity and the public expressions of memory<sup>41</sup>. Propaganda developed a system of interpretation of events. This system is more than mere historical stories rebuilt from a communist perspective. They are a form of "storytelling"<sup>42</sup> that scored historic speech in a logical manipulation.

The existence of the Sector of Cadres and the Educational Work in Schools and Faculty in the organization of the Departement of the Propaganda and Press in 1973 outlines the desire of the regime to better control the educational system and, to manage the propaganda system like an educational tool. Disciplines such as History and Philosophy had to be guided and controlled by one force, that of the party. The July 1971 Thesis stated that "there must be a single Faculty of Philosophy, because the country has one philosophy. This faculty must work under the Central Committee, in close connection with the Academy of Political and Social Sciences"<sup>43</sup>. In History there was the same problem: "We must have only one history, one conception of history, the dialectical and historical materialism," he said in the July Thesis. In general, teachers who teach social sciences had to be former party activists, recommended by the party institutions. In this way, the task of writing and interpretation of history fell into the hands of the party. Propaganda supported this process: the principle of a Marxist interpretation of history. The popularization of the Party history was supported by the entire propaganda system. "Class struggle" was one of the magazines

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<sup>41</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History and the Forgetfulness*, (Timișoara: Amarcord, 2001), page 104. (Paul Ricoeur, *Memoria, istoria, uitarea*, Timișoara: Editura Amarcord, 2001, p. 104).

<sup>42</sup> The concept of "storytelling" appeared in 1990 in the US and it is a propaganda technique. The concept includes a form of control and power. (Christian Salmon, *Storytelling, la machine à fabriquer des histoires et à former les esprits*, Paris: Editions la Découverte, 2008, pages 7, 12)

<sup>43</sup> *The Proposal of Measures for improvement of politico-ideological activation, for Marxist-Leninist education of party members, of all working people, in „Romania on the Road to Build the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society. Reports, speeches, articles. May 1971-February 1972"*, volume 6, Bucharest, 1972, page 233. (*Propuneri de măsuri pentru îmbunătățirea activității politico-ideologice, de educare marxist-leninistă a membrilor de partid, a tuturor oamenilor muncii. 6 iulie 1971, în Nicolae Ceaușescu, "România pe drumul onstruirii societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate. Rapoarte, cuvântări, articole. Mai 1971-februarie 1972"*, vol. 6, Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1972, p. 233).

that had to help to develop a social and national tradition. The main thematic directions included: "to analyze and generalize the experience in bringing the Romanian Communist Party revolution and the construction of socialism; studying the action and objective of socialism and the social-economic processes; the analysis of changes in our country in the stage of building the multilaterally developed socialist society"<sup>44</sup>.

Summing up the arguments I put forth above, it can be concluded that the bureaucratic system of propaganda was closely linked with the transformation of the vision towards society. Beginning with 1968, considering that the propagandists were better qualified in their work, they did not receive all the documentary support from the Central Committee anymore. As I mentioned throughout this paper, the propagandists were a special category of propaganda actors who made the system of propaganda work. The propagandist should not be seen only as a manipulator of the word, but also as a simple man, who should construct his own propagandistic speech<sup>45</sup>. However, in 1968, the reorganization of propaganda was accompanied by a change in the way the broadcast the system of propaganda and perception about himself. All the measures applied in the propaganda system had a consequence on the propaganda instructors, and on society as well.

The Propaganda Department was initiated as a vertical and horizontal flow of information. The hierarchy and the vertical control are necessary elements of existence and efficiency of propaganda. Jacques Ellul talks about propaganda that comes up, as characterized by passive attitude of the subject. The individual is manipulated, engaged in his actions, but turned into an object. This depersonalization of the individual is due to the fact that decisions are not of his own, but are suggested by a leader and imposed like a conditioned reflex. But still,

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<sup>44</sup> Note on improving the activity and the content of magazine "Class struggle", "Contemporary", "Labor Party" and its supplement, "Helping the propagandist", National Central Historical Archives, fond of Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Section of Propaganda and Agitation, file no. 24/1972, pages 2, 3. (Notă cu privire la îmbunătățirea activității și conținutului activității „Lupta de clasă”, „Contemporanul”, „Munca de partid” și suplimentul său, „În ajutorul propagandistului”, în ANIC, fond CC al PCR, Secția Propagandă și Agitație, dosar nr. 24/1972, ff. 2-3).

<sup>45</sup> The Propagandist is a manipulator behind the camera. He knows why he says something, and what should be the effect. His word is not human, but a technical one. He does not express a feeling, a spontaneous idea, but everything is calculated in advance. He was not required to believe in what he says, but to affirm those things as if they believe (Jacques Ellul, *Propagandes*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1962, page 35.)



this vertical flow of information would have never survived without the existence of horizontal propaganda created by other social bodies<sup>46</sup>. Therefore, propaganda is characterized by the enormity of the hierarchy of the administrative apparatus, and horizontal propaganda is characterized by the enormity of the social organism.

The institutional transformation of the propaganda reflected the new political direction of the Ceaușescu's leadership. The national path became a mark for the propaganda institution as well. From this perspective, the propaganda organization can be perceived like an „organized faith”<sup>47</sup>, which developed special tools for persuasion and control. This means that the implication of political power to perfecting the propaganda mechanism also presupposes the aim of the political power to engage people to support the regime. This does not only involve the dimension of manipulation, but it also involves a dimension of communication between the political system and society and the creation of a social identity.

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<sup>46</sup> Brigitte Studer, *L'etre perfectible. La formation du cadre stalinien par le travail sur soi*, in "Geneses 51", (June, 2003), p. 94.

<sup>47</sup> Derek J.R.Scott, *Russian Political Institutions*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publisher, 1965), p. 187.