

BEING A JOURNALIST IN THE COMMUNIST PRESS OF THE '60s IN ROMANIA. THE ACTIVITY OF ION BRAD FOR *SCÂNTEIA TINERETULUI* (1960-1962)

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ABSTRACT. Author Ion Brad lived most of his life under the Communist regime, starting his career when the Communist system was founded in Romania and retiring in 1989, when the totalitarian system was abolished. This present study aims at analyzing the articles which author and journalist Ion Brad had published for one of the most prominent newspapers during the Communist regime in Romania, in the '60s, *Scânteia tineretului*. Directed especially at young people but not only, the newspaper reveals the various practices of the Communist state to impose on the collective minds. We have chosen this particular publication and this period of time in Ion Brad's activity because this is when, in our opinion, he did the most intense work in the political journalism. As an author, he wrote hundreds of articles and tens of books in the cultural field. This study can also be helpful for further research on the political issues approached in *Scânteia tineretului* or even on economic issues, in which one can analyze the reports about the construction of various towns in Romania under the Communist regime.

Keywords: Ion Brad, Communism, newspapers, *Scânteia tineretului*, Romania, Romanian Communist Party, monarchy, industrialization.

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1. Preamble

Scânteia tineretului used to be one of the most well-known “workshops” of the Communist representatives. Entire speeches of the party leaders were published there and it was an efficient instrument of propaganda amongst the population. Whenever they were away for work (in the Soviet Union, for instance), the speeches of the Romanian and Soviet officials were equally reflected in the newspaper, no more, nor less. An enormous amount of people worked for the newspaper: 180 employees². Ion Brad started to collaborate with *Scânteia tineretului* before being employed as editor-in-chief, via his poems. In 1960, he was offered a part-time position for the culture section of the publication. Besides being editor for the culture section, he was also at times “a clear head”³ for the paper. As expected, the editorial staff consisted of key people for the Communist regime in Romania, people having studied at Workers' University of the Romanian Communist Party, for example (future „Ștefan Gheorghiu” Academy): “At *Scânteia tineretului*, Anghel Paraschiv was promoted instead of Ion Brad; he had graduated from the Institute of Cadre «Ștefan Gheorghiu», coming from a workers' family. Cornel Răducan, who had worked under the previous regime, husband of a remarkable dancer, occupied the position of assistant editor-in-chief.”⁴

The press and journalists of the time were very useful in spreading ideas. This is also obvious in the official data from the speeches. We cautiously present such information (it is difficult to say if this is accurate or not), related by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, leader of the Romanian Communist Party at the time: books had an annual circulation of about 35 million copies, newspapers had an annual

² *Apud* Ilie Rad, *Conversations with Ion Brad: “spring to fall” (April-October 2013)*, Eikon Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, p. 177.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 177.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 174.

circulation of 900 million copies⁵, whereas the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin had a circulation of 1.300.000 copies⁶. It was at the same time that the leader of the Romanian Communist Party asked those in charge of the propaganda to deal with the “practicability of the socialist construction”⁷. In one of his memoirs, Ion Brad declared the newspaper had paid him RON 700⁸.

The interval 1960-1961 is of great importance in the rise of Ion Brad in the Communist hierarchy. Until 1961, he was a candidate for the position of member of the Romanian Workers' Party. In 1961 he was welcomed in the party, even though 3 years earlier, in 1958, they had removed him from his position as editor-in-chief with the children's magazine *Cravata roșie* (accused of having spread religious and mystical ideas). This is how the party took good care of their new members, consequently they allowed Ion Brad to publish. They also invited him more and more to take part in the conferences of the relevant organizations of the time. In 1961, Ion Brad was officially welcomed in the Romanian Workers' Party, a position he kept until 1989. This interval shows his rise in the hierarchy. In a photo taken during a national conference of the writers, Ion Brad is standing next to the supreme leader of the party, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej.

2. Beginnings of his collaboration with *Scânteia tineretului*

Ion Brad had published lots of poems in *Scânteia tineretului* since 1959, most having proletkultist titles such as: *Un strop din vocea lui* (A drop of his voice), *Piscul de lumină* (The light summit), *Brigăzi, în șiruri* (Brigades, in rows) or *Mândria noastră, tinere miner* (Our pride,

⁵ Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, *Report of the 3rd Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party*, Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1960, p. 18, available under <https://goo.gl/gfpaQk> (accessed on 16.04.2018, at 18:21).

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 97, (accessed on 16.04.2018, at 20:53).

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 97, (accessed on 16.04.2018, at 20:53).

⁸ Ilie Rad, *Conversations with Ion Brad: “spring to fall” (April-October 2013)*, Eikon Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, p. 178.

young miner). Analyzing the articles published by Ion Brad in the period of time 1960-1962 in *Scânteia tineretului*, I concluded that the themes approached by the author render in one way or another the political beliefs of the time. The journalistic activity he had with the publication proves his complete and utter adherence as a writer to the rules. Up to that moment and after that, his articles never rendered such obvious political beliefs. We could say that the period of time 1960-1962 stands for the climax of his writing activity in the political press. For more accuracy, I had a look at the articles written in the previous years (1959) and the years after he left the publication (1962 – he left at the beginning of the year). There is a total of 45 articles signed by Ion Brad, some of them consisting of public statements made during writers' conferences. In some of the articles – if there was necessary – I also explained the political and social context in which the articles were published, so that anyone could better understand why the author needed to take a certain stand. Apart from that, I included in my study further different titles I found in the same issue, in order to highlight additional points of interests of the Communist press. Due to space limitations, I chose to present only the most prominent articles. It is also worth mentioning that I performed a chronological analysis, thus I had to mention some historical details among the relevant articles.

It is of relevance to say when it comes to the writing activity of Ion Brad for *Scânteia tineretului* that he didn't fail to stick to the instructions given by the leader of the Romanian Workers' Party, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. This is an example of how Dej established rules in the field of press and propaganda: "The propaganda and agitation department, the press and radio, must ensure that the provisions of the 6-year plan, both general and individual for each branch and each group, should be thoroughly known by all working classes."⁹

⁹ Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, *Report of the 3rd Communist Party Congress*, Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1960, p. 99, available under <https://goo.gl/gfpaQk> (accessed on 16.04.2018, at 20:59).

3. Articles written by Ion Brad for *Scânteia tineretului*

At the end of 1959, Ion Brad published his first articles in *Scânteia tineretului*. December 19th 1959, he published his first article *Uneori "...dragostea pe sine se iubeste"* (*At times, love loves itself*). The plot is about an impossible love story. Young girl Dorina Grigore, fascinated and in love with young Mircea Dima, experiences a profound drama after having been neglected by him. She sends a letter to the newspaper, and the author of the articles tries to find the young lover at his workplace to request some explanations for his behavior. After a brief interview, he describes Mircea – a shallow young man, a fan of parties – the author tells Dorina to think more clearly and not let herself fall into her own illusions (Brad agrees with the Russian writer Maxim Gorki on the verse "love loves itself" from the poem *Fata și moartea* (*The girl and death*), his source of inspiration). According to Ion Brad, getting such situations sorted following the Communist pattern requires "romantism through reason, not babbling and confused sentimentalism"¹⁰. Brad finishes his article by urging his readership to find answers to questions related to the normal relations between two young people. This sort of "recommendations" that Ion Brad made for young girls show the "teachings" of the Communist officials for the young generation: young men need to be hard working and build a family, because too many parties never serve a useful purpose; he who only parties and won't have a family, is no good – so girls should not consider marrying them.

3.1. Anti-monarchy articles

The day of January 3rd, 1960, marks the beginning of the harsh articles against the former monarchy and the king. The first 1960 article is supposed to describe the New Year Eve's party which he attended at the Palace of the Republic (former Royal Palace). The choice of words

¹⁰ Ion Brad, *At times "...love loves itself"*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XV, 2nd series, no. 3297, December 19th, 1959, p. 4.

“is supposed to describe” the party is not an accident. This is an occasion when political opinions are spread and people are manipulated against the royal family. The article contains a black and white photo in which young people dance. In the attacks presented in the newspaper, the author refers to the former King of Romania, who is described as a dragon, a monster with a venomous and saliva spitting tongue¹¹. This kind of writing approach will be the stance of Ion Brad’s articles in *Scânteia tineretului*. I will now present the pro-Communism ideas of the author and those against the royal family. I’ve selected the most obvious and relevant paragraphs. This is what the author stated about Michael I of Romania: “Can’t get emotional in front of a king whom our parents chased away before it was late, asking him to go away using the same words that people had used a century ago: «Pack your things/ Get your lady/ Off you go/ To far off places/ Only come back here/ When slavery is a wish of Romania.» In other words, never again! No, we, as guests of the Palace, have no emotions at all.”¹² In a different paragraph he said: “It (my note, Mihai Cistelican: Romanian Workers' Party) placed in the hands of the mob the sparkly sword 12 years ago, to cut off the last head of the dragon who snuggled down all over our country, getting pleasure in tens of palaces and coiling around fortresses’ towers and hitting with his tail as far as eyes can see the so-called personal lands. Isn’t that a youthful gesture, cutting off in just one stroke the venomous and fiery tongue, leaving the monster with just a snoring and spit throwing stump, which the wind blows back on its own cheeks!”¹³ In an interview¹⁴ I had for the magazine *Acasă*, soon to be published, Ion Brad admitted his anti-monarchy attitude was an overreaction, stating that the environment and the context had modelled his beliefs: “Yes, a lot has changed. I was overreacting [...].

¹¹ *Spit* s. f. – saliva (thick, foamy) produces in the mouth of adults, children and animals.

¹² Ion Brad, *We were invited to the Palace*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XV, 2nd series, no. 3308, January 3rd, 1960, p. 1.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Ion Brad: „My attitude towards Michael I of Romania was over the top under the Communism”. Interview by Mihai Cistelican in the magazine *Acasă*, soon to be published.

When Carol II of Romania ran away with Elena Lupescu, everyone considered that an act of treason. As refugees in Portugal, they lived from the sale of very valuable paintings.”

On March the 8th, Ion Brad suggested the readers of *Scânteia tineretului* an analysis on women in the Romanian folklore. He picked some female personalities from Romanian recognized masterpieces and described their qualities. Be it *Miorița*, be it the myth of Meșterul Manole (roughly The master builder Manole), the author positively describes the very well-known women: Ana Ipătescu, Ecaterina Teodoroiu, Elena Sârbu and others. Indirectly, the author underlines that women have a much better life under Communism, using phrases such as: “(personal note: referring to the old regime) women were considered as low as slaves” or “in such a world, love and marriage themselves could be traded in, whilst «harmony» within family was an enormous lie told by the exploiters”¹⁵. To support these beliefs, Ion Brad uses verses meant to reinforce his readers’ beliefs. Furthermore, he uses traditional songs in which love and affection are rendered playfully and easy to understand by all Romanians. Later on, he drops several hints about the lack of love of the Romanians towards wealthy people, indirectly referring to the rich peasants (kulak): “As expected, once our people had untangled the web of a society which harmed souls and turned women into slaves, then built a new world, new poetry came into being. These poems celebrate women as proud beings, after being released from the bourgeois constraints, her involvement in all artistic fields, her light giving love.”¹⁶

It is not surprising at all that such articles written about heroines, hard working women and women involved in the reality were very common in the communist society¹⁷, and Ion Brad wrote a lot of such articles to support those ideas. We cannot comment on all of those articles due to space limitations.

¹⁵ Ion Brad, “Can’t tell if it’s moonlight or it’s daylight,/ My beloved walking out...” – *Women in folklore* –, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVI, 2nd series, no. 3363, March 8th, 1960, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

¹⁷ <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/femeia-comunista-mama-eroina-muncitoare-activista> (accessed on 4.1.2019).

The article dated June 19th, 1960, is another article consisting of ideas and themes taken from the speeches of the Communist officials or on the meanness of the “bourgeoisie”. The articles came out a day before the 3rd Congress of the Romanian Workers’ Party. During a conversation Ion Brad had with two young actresses, they emphasize how tough and humiliating it was to be an actress before the Communist regime, and how enjoyable it was in the socialist society. “The party of the working class rescued the new generation from the drama of the old generation of creators and artists who, so many times, had been forced by the bourgeoisie to let go of the liberty and dignity of true, great art”¹⁸, noted Ion Brad. Prostitution, pornography and intimidation - at least that’s what they claimed during the communist society - it was the way to treat young women aspiring to become actresses in the monarchy: “We are lucky to have skipped over the humiliating performance of the former actors, forced to perform in front of a bourgeois audience requesting framed pornography and prostitution as «substitution» instead of «the sacred stage performance».”¹⁹ Theatre used to be, based on the article, an elitist form of art, only affordable by wealthy people: “It is worth mentioning – said Ileana Predescu – which was the first question they asked young women knocking on a theatre’s door most of the times: «Tell me, girl, who’s going to buy your dresses and jewelry?» Luckily, we’ve only heard from third parties of such questions.”²⁰

3.2. How Brad described the Communist Party in his articles

The 3rd Communist Party Congress was thoroughly presented in the newspapers (articles about this event were written even 10 days after); The speech of the leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej shows a bigger attention to the importance of the Party and less attention to the Soviet influence – as it was the case until the end of the ’50s. A possible

¹⁸ Ion Brad, ...*And of the artist, as messenger of communist beliefs*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVI, 2nd series, no. 3451, June 19th, 1960, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

explanation of this slight change in attitude at the beginning of the '60s might also be the fact that the Soviets had already left Romania in 1958, consequently the communist leaders were facing a De-Stalinization stage. Ion Brad also signed such an article, more precisely *Each, being the best!* The author praises the projects and speeches held at the Congress and writes about some young men who are happy the metallurgical issues they were interested in got sorted out. Everything was done under "wonderful" conditions which "our party" made available. The phrase "our party" shows the lack of ambiguity the author wants to induce: "The brigade decided that all young people should take admission exams and enroll in schools – so that all could become well educated workers, masters of technical studies, up to the wonderful standards which our party makes available to those who are willing to learn. And again, even in terms of education, each, being the best!"²¹ The importance of the party has increasingly become a common theme in his articles, even when he writes about villas and holiday places. These constructions were most likely event venues and had been built – the author was eager to mention – by "the working class, through the good care of the unbeatable architect which is our party."²²

This article too²³ approaches the theme of the bourgeoisie. Ion Brad claims that before the Communism the bourgeois and the "royal entourage" attended these villas. Similarly, Brad presents what people used to do at the former casino in the mountain resort Sinaia before the Communism: they used to gamble the millions they had stolen from the pockets of the poor. Brad does not give details, he is good just generalizing this issue using slogans. Well, in the Communism, says the author, you don't see such things: artists and performances replaced the wrong-doing bourgeois.

²¹ Ion Brad, *Each, being the best!*, in *Scân-teia tineretului*, XVI, 2nd series, no. 3460, June 30th, 1960, p. 3.

²² Ion Brad, *To the working class – have a nice rest!*, in *Scân-teia tineretului*, XVI, 2nd series, no. 3482, July 26th, 1960, p. 2.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

What's interesting is that Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej spoke about bourgeoisie at the 3rd Communist Party Congress, and Ion Brad seems to use that as a source of inspiration and brings forth arguments taken from the speech of the former leader of the Communists. Dej shows in his speech that the bourgeois morals should be deleted from the conscience of the citizens: "Founding a socialist conscience and erasing the influences of the bourgeois education and moral is a long-term task. [...]"²⁴, said the former leader of the Party.

In another one of his articles - *Maturitate (Maturity)*, Brad analyzes the concepts of youth, enthusiasm and maturity under the socialist and royalist regimes. As expected, these virtues are presented as positive in the communist society whereas everything was useless under the royal rule. The arguments Ion Brad brings forth are party-related: "Twenty years ago, when the present enthusiasts were born, what reasons did the youth of this country have to be thrilled about? Poverty was harshly stopping, failing to satisfy, destroying and suffocating all hopes. No. At the time, youth could not go hand in hand with enthusiasm."²⁵ On the other hand, when he speaks about the Communist youth participating in the 3rd Congress of the Union of Communist Youth, Brad says that "the maturity of the minds and words of these young people left a strong impression"²⁶. Furthermore, the author of the article identifies in the young generation a "clear" and "bright" purpose: the construction of socialism. Obviously, socialism could not be constructed without "the immensity and clearness of the plans drafted by the party", and "its wonderful ideology - Marxism-Leninism -."²⁷ Analyzing what Gheorghe

²⁴ Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, *Report of the 3rd Communist Party Congress*, Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1960, p. 101, available under <https://goo.gl/gfpaQk> (accessed on 16.04.2018, at 20:08).

²⁵ Ion Brad, *Maturity*, in *Scântea tinereții*, XVI, 2nd series, no. 3504, August 20th, 1960, p. 1.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 1.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 1.

Gheorghiu-Dej said at the 3rd Communist Party Congress, Ion Brad seems to have used that as a source of inspiration, as he had the same ideas about the role of the party in society²⁸.

In an article about August 23 (the day when Romania turned on the side of the Allies in World War II and against Germany) the author describes in a propagandistic manner the first history lesson a child is taught. After watching on TV or listening on the radio the military parade on 23rd August, the little ones would ask their parents questions such as: why was he injured (with regard to the soldiers fighting against fascists)? How was the fight? Who were the enemies?²⁹ The answers to all these questions are presented several rows below: "From that point onward, phrases flow naturally, hatred finds place in the heart against the fascists who brought death in the country, words gain fire wings. Children feel that their eyes sparkle in an unusual light. And they gradually understand why the sacrifice of the soldiers and the granite with which the hand of the nation scribbled the everlasting inscription «August, 23, 1944»"³⁰ laid the foundation of freedom, of the country and their own homes. The theme of "fight" is deeply rooted in the minds of Communists, and obviously in the mind of Ion Brad. Along Communist history, we have faced the fight against class enemy, fight to do better and fight of the new man etc. The military terminology used in the public Communist language, such as "fight" or "mobilization", were also used in economy whenever they wanted to emphasize the growth of production or the growth of the Party, as shown by the critic and literary historian Nicolae Manolescu³¹.

²⁸ Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, *Report of the 3rd Communist Party Congress*, Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1960, p. 89-90, available under <https://goo.gl/gfpaQk> (accessed on 16.04.2018, at 20:34).

²⁹ Ion Brad, *First history lesson*, in *Scântea tineretului*, XVI, 2nd series, no. 3507, August 25, 1960, p. 2.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

³¹ *Apud*. Nicoleta Mihai, *Wooden language of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej*, in Ilie Rad (coordinator), *Wooden language in press*, Tritonic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 218.

As of 1960, the work of Ion Brad gradually consists of articles in which the main theme is peace. This is not surprising at all considering that this year indicates new orientations of the Romanian communists; though timid at first, they speak more and more about “the beloved party” and “peace”. The subject matters related to peace are various, however they all seem to follow the same pattern: arguments related to the importance of peace all over the world, the role of Communists in this respect, the desire of “royalists” and “bourgeoisie” to maintain conflict and war, as well as launching a peace call to the readership.

Such an example would also be the article about the official trip of the Romanian delegation and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, to New York, to participate in the 15th UN General Assembly. Talking about train engines with the young men working at the train station of Grivița, Ion Brad subtly speaks about peace in the world: “Train engines along people must have experienced horrible dramas in the last world war.”³² Who else could have brought peace in the world if not communists when they took over the reins: “It has been 16 years since we started to lead our people towards achievements instead of disasters.”³³ Just like in other articles signed by Brad, bourgeoisie and royalists seem to want war: “Their thoughts and aspirations for peace and understanding amongst people, for knowing and collaborating with the youth all over the world, for defending and putting an end to war and the desires of the royal troublemakers who want revenge.”³⁴

A certain detachment from a given time can easily be perceived in the articles written by Ion Brad. The Stalinist patterns and phrases he used in the '50s now turned into slogans of the '60s. Anyways, the entire press of the time indicated a relaxation after the departure of the Soviet troops from Romania. Thus, Ion Brad uses the first person in

³² Ion Brad, *Fondly thinking of our group of delegates at UN Assembly. May train engines only pull along peaceful coaches in the world*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVI, 2nd series, no. 3526, September 16, 1960, p. 3.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

his articles, he has his own opinions and generally writes in a more personal way. On the other way, even the propaganda technique turns slightly different in his articles. On the whole, he praises the regime but always uses real data and situations, he positively presents the salary and life of workers and then, at the end of the article, he makes clear statements (as a conclusion) about the Party, the Communism, the supreme leader and Soviets. For instance, closely following this structure, we mention the article *"The giants" of our times*, referring to the workers who "build" Communism. The clarification is only made at the end. The article tells the story of a wood-processing plant, built in Târnave region, and also speaks about the young workers working there or studying in the nearby schools³⁵.

3.3. Reports from the building sites of the country

Ion Brad wrote his first article in the year 1961 after a trip taken for professional purposes in Galați. He wrote a report on site and showed how things were done in the local factories and plants. All along his article he was keen to show how resonant and how meaningful the word "constructor" was in socialism. He was absolutely sure that based on a survey on the frequency of the words used at the time, the following would have come first: "party", "home country", "socialism", coming second "work", "achievement", "plan", "construction", "well-being". After all, he might have been right considering the titles present in that issue of the magazine *Scânteia tineretului: Well-organized work has good outcomes*³⁶, by Romulus Lal, *Worker, pupil and innovator*³⁷, edited by Petre Marin, titles rendering the exact words mentioned by Brad.

³⁵ Ion Brad, *"The giants" of our times*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVI, 2nd series, no. 3562, October 28, 1960, p. 1.

³⁶ Ion Brad, *Well-organized work has good outcomes*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3639, January 27, 1961, p. 2.

³⁷ Ion Brad, *Worker, pupil and innovator*, in *Scânteia tineretului* XVII, 2nd series, no. 3639, January 27, 1961, p. 4.

As long as he worked for *Scânteia tineretului*, the author wrote many articles from the construction sites of the country at the time. We only mention some. The author's attitude can be explained once the leader of the Workers' Party requested that socialist industrialization should be more thoroughly debated in the papers of the time: "Even on such a crucial issue of the party policy, which is socialist industrialization, some of the materials issued have approached matters in a stereotypical and static way, without reflecting the rich experience gained by the party in the industrialization process, its most prominent aspects in the current stage of our economic development"³⁸, said Dej. Later on in the article, the author says how many families received a flat (1300) from the communist regime and how many were about to get one (1700) in the following year, whereas the number was to increase to 20.000 in the coming 4 years. He also presents the strong connection the deputies were going to have with the word - "constructor" - taking into account that they decided to set up a factory in Galați, during the 3rd Communist Party Congress.

Ion Brad makes one comment in his article and this comment could summarize communism. Some young men come to join a club of constructors working on a building site: "And of course, for everyone something is possible."³⁹ This final phrase is somehow defining for the old regime: regardless of what line of work you did, the Party always had something for you to do so that you, in your turn, could then prove your devotion to it. All you had to do was to accept and support the regime (same is valid for press, great Romanian writers joined the lines of the regime). Press and cinematography also. It would be of relevance to note the use of this concept in communist cinematography, because apparently it was implemented on different cultural levels. Writer Cristian Tudor Popescu identified this way of raising a matter in the

³⁸ Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, *Report of the 3rd Communist Party Congress*, Political Publishing House, Bucharest, 1960, p. 102, available under <https://goo.gl/gfpaQk> (accessed on 16.04.2018, at 21:15).

³⁹ Ion Brad, *Resonances of the constructing word*, in *Scânteia tineretului* XVII, 2nd series, no. 3639, January 27, 1961, p. 4.

film *Faleză de nisip* (*Sand cliffs*), which premiered in the cinemas in 1982: "First scene in *Faleză de nisip* – the thin silhouette of young Vasile who, after feeding a stray dog, flirts with Turkish girl Oana Pellea, buys himself a doughnut and then eats it up, then is busy throwing flat rocks in the Black Sea. He commits the first serious anti-social crime: he does nothing, has no job, just hangs out on the beach dressed in a T-shirt and with his jeans lifted up to his knees."⁴⁰

Ion Brad wrote many articles full of admiration about the construction of the Galați steel works, using such phrases: "to give even stronger steel wings to our socialist industry in the years to come"⁴¹ or "on the solid ground of human souls they laid, if we could say that, the deep foundations of construction."⁴² In his biased attitude about the steel works and environment in Galați, the author analyses a letter sent to the building site, in which a young lady expressed her eagerness to work on the site⁴³ or situations in which young men wanted to see the manager in person to get a job. Most articles written at the beginning of 1961 praise the construction of new plants in the country and new achievements (an example of a headline on the cover of *Scântea tineretului: Agricultural engineering defeats drought*). The series of articles Ion Brad wrote while being on site, in Galați, is continued in a further issue of the paper. He beautifully describes the town on the bank of the Danube. What's interesting about this article is the more pragmatic approach, as he does not focus that much on the ideas so well-known up to that point, at least at first. The author uses 1st person singular and describes a meeting at a young worker's house – he is presented as a hero in the communist press: "Certainties have become louder, the satisfaction of personal work has brilliantly been interwoven in the collective work, actually it has become a satisfaction of the whole

⁴⁰ Cristian Tudor Popescu, *Silent film in silent Romania: politics and propaganda in Romanian motion movies (1912-1989)*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2011, p. 268.

⁴¹ Ion Brad, "I ask and respectfully intervene...", in *Scântea tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3641, January 29, 1961, p. 1.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 1.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 1.

country. A satisfaction of our socialist industry"⁴⁴, concluded the author. Brad thought that the choices the leaders made were to be blamed for all these wrongdoings. Everything was just a farce, emphasized the author: "We all know very well who those gentlemen were. Demagogy forces them to say in gargling and snoring tones words such as «people» and «democracy», being supervised from behind by bobbies and coshes"⁴⁵.

Another false idea spread by Ion Brad in this article is his statement according to which the citizens of Romania elected the Communists, failing to mention the influence of the Soviets in this process. On the other hand, the detachment from the Soviets had already been obvious in the press since 1961. Such comments are to be found in Ion Brad's article: "it is only in our years of popular democracy that the reins of the country were taken over by the true representatives of the people, who had elected them."⁴⁶

3.4. Changes in orientation

Romania pulled back from Moscow for a number of reasons; historians offered a lot of versions for "this change of attitude". The beginning of this attitude was basically put into practice when Romania refused the Soviet ideas in terms of economic specialization (DIVISION OF LABOUR) in the countries under "its wing"⁴⁷. Plus, in Romania, in the '60s, the trend was to densely populate towns by bringing peasants from rural areas. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej made his position and desire for independence even more noticeable through the famous "Declaration of independence" or "Declaration of April 1964" which asserted the right to independence for communist

⁴⁴ Ion Brad, *A radiogram for constructors*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3642, January 31, 1961, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Ion Brad, "I look at my country today" – *New popular poems*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3650, February 9, 1961, p. 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Florin Constantiniu, *A Sincere History of the Romanian People*, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 494-495.

parties – which truly means independence from the Soviet Union –⁴⁸. The relations between Dej and Khrushchev were not some of the best at the time either. Dej's private secretary mentioned in his memoirs that the Romanian leader sometimes would privately curse him and call him names such as "redneck"⁴⁹.

Ion Brad gives special attention to the new social demographic phenomenon of moving peasants from the countryside into towns in one of his articles. He approaches the issue in his typical way, focusing on details. He wrote about the "village from yesterday", being subject to major changes in the period of time 1950-1960, during collectivization. The author agrees to the fact that the village from "yesterday" has changed but he says this is due to people. Ion Brad expressed his thought in a A-list communist newspaper by making use of an interesting comment made by a communist (atheist in theory): "According to an old saying, a good farmer makes a good farm."⁵⁰ Brad also says that rich peasants (kulaks) were no longer present at the time: "the biggest exploiting class and the related exploitation forms in agriculture."⁵¹ With regard to the jobs and the opportunities young people had in the countryside, the author claims there were few during the monarchy, and he presents them in a bleak way, using words such as: "Tractor drivers? A job unheard of at the time. [...] They used cows to plough the fields, until they fell down to the ground. Cows, those who had them."⁵²

3.5. Schools before and during Communism

This is an analysis regarding the children attending school before and during Communism. Before: "Among those who 20 years

⁴⁸ <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/gh-gheorghiu-dej-in-istoriografia-actuala> (accessed on 10.05.2018, at 16: 49).

⁴⁹ Paul Sfetcu, *13 years in Dej's waiting room*, Selection, foreword and notes by Lavinia Betea, Publishing House of the Romanian Cultural Foundation, Bucharest, 2000, p. 300.

⁵⁰ Ion Brad, *At sea*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3663, February 24, 1961, p. 3.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 3.

ago went barefoot to their 4-class schools until snow set in, carrying in their bags full of damaged books a chunk of cold polenta"⁵³ – based on our calculations, it must have been in 1941, during World War II, when Romania was an ally of Germany. During Communism: "Some of them still go to school with their schoolbags full of free books from the State, others already attend technical schools for agriculture."⁵⁴

In 1961, elections were called in Romania for the Great National Assembly. United by the same aspiration, which is the Alliance of the Democratic Popular Front (FDP), Romanian political parties (communist parties) and trade unions win with a considerable score: 99,7% of the national vote⁵⁵. In this context, Ion Brad writes a report in the villages and townships located in the valley of Someș. He wanted to find out what electors and candidates had to say. As expected, it is a positive article for the candidates for FDP. Manipulation is easy to notice here as well. The use of figures and key words is meant to support the idea that communism has brought along welfare, whereas FDP enjoys full trust and love from the people. One of the key words Ion Brad heard on the lips of electors/voters is "constructions"; some of the figures are: 473 families (all of the villagers) entered into "a collective farm", value of the goods sold in 1960 by the locals: RON 3 million or a number of 147 of newly built houses and further similar information. "Our party's policy for socialist transformation of agriculture is thriving. Peasants say that in clear words and they are proud of it"⁵⁶, noted the author.

The presentation of statistical data (for instance, number of houses built) is part of a wooden language often used by authorities, and also an instrument for manipulation: the more exact the numbers, the most reliable they seem. The figures used in the press of the time are a way to mystify reality⁵⁷. For example, they never published

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁵⁵ <http://www.timpuldevalcea.net/?p=11383> (accessed on 27.04.2018, at 16:44).

⁵⁶ Ion Brad, *What electors and their candidates had to say*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3665, February 26, 1961, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Nicoleta Mihai, *Wooden language of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej*, Ilie Rad (coordonator), *Wooden language in the press*, Tritonic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 211.

figures that could have presented in a negative way the communist regime in Romania. Communist leaders also used difficult to verify data⁵⁸. Ion Brad referred quite often to the achievements of the socialism. Be it newly built plants or households, they used a lot of numbers and generalizations in those articles. According to researcher Gabriela Rusu-Păsărin, the excessive use of generalizations gives the reader the feeling of the irreversible⁵⁹. Plus, political reality was made clear in the papers: a quick look in *Scântea tineretului* was enough for anyone to notice the detachment from the Soviets and the “nationalist” policy in the articles which indeed anticipated Romania’s position towards the situation in Czechoslovakia, clearly against the Soviet intervention in the area.

Election day in 1961 finds Ion Brad on the field, at the polling stations, in order to find out how the process is going, he takes interviews and describes the support for FDP candidates. To be noted the atmosphere he describes: “It was before 06:00. March 5th starts, it is election day. At the polling station no. 1 Grivița Roșie, citizens knew they were going to vote comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej for the Great General Assembly – beloved son of the working class and of the entire people.”⁶⁰ This sort of doctrine for the Party and idolatry of the “comrade” was to increase dramatically in the press during the Socialist Republic of Romania.

3.6. New: how peasants watched TV news

In 1961, Ion Brad goes on a working visit in the village Zăpodeni (Vaslui County). The author speaks highly about the region and makes an interesting comment on Mihai Eminescu: “and the somehow sad pride that he once was visited by the miserable school inspector Mihail

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 211.

⁵⁹ *Radiophonic message between information and manipulation*, by Gabriela Rusu-Păsărin, Ilie Rad (coordinator), *Manipulation techniques of the public opinion: National Symposium of Journalism*, Tribuna Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 222-223.

⁶⁰ Ion Brad, *At dawn, down Calea Griviței*, in *Scântea tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3672, March 6, 1961, p. 1-2.

Eminescu.”⁶¹ Back to the main ideas present in the article, Ion Brad summarizes all the cultural events organized in the village on the 40th celebration of the Romanian Communist Party. Another aspect of “the cultural life”, quite new for those times, which Brad highlights, is how villagers used to watch TV news at the local community center. This is even more significant considering that television broadcasting was relatively new in Romania, as of 1956. What Ion Brad does is to describe how TV programs looked like 5 years after being released: “Even though the sound is not synchronized and images are not always the best, people eagerly watch the news (which are slightly outdated)”⁶². During a working visit in Zăpodeni, Vaslui County (he wrote before about it), Ion Brad writes a new article about Mihai Eminescu, to be published in a different issue. The author approaches it in the same way communists approached other artists and writers. The procedure was simple, manipulative and interpretable. Basically, what they did was to identify a great personality in the artistic or cultural field, then they tried to spot articles, books, performances or scientific events similar to the values which the issuer had and with which they could have identified themselves. In this article, the author published the notes Eminescu made when he was a school inspector and then compares those to how things were during Communism. The conclusion of the author is eloquent in this respect: “If Eminescu inspected today the 8 schools in Zăpodeni and the surrounding villages [...] he might scribble again «insufficient staff» in his notebook. However, this wouldn’t refer to 7 pupils taught by starving teacher Ciureanu, but to those over 800 pupils taught by 35 teachers and educators sent by the Party and our state to bring to life the Eminescian dreams.”⁶³ In the winter of 1962, Ion Brad leaves the magazine *Scânteia tineretului*, after having been appointed secretary of the Writers’ Union of Romania.

⁶¹ Ion Brad, *Sunday in a Moldovan village*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3688, March 24, 1961, p. 1.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁶³ Ion Brad, *Eminescu walked by*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3708, April 16, 1961, p. 2.

4. Conclusions

Analyzing the entire activity of the author Ion Brad during Communism, I can say that his time with the magazine *Scânteia tineretului* stands for the most intense period in his career when he writes articles supporting the system. And that's not all - he also becomes a member of the Party. Consequently, it is difficult to mention objectivity and neutrality in this context. Keeping an impartial look at the author, from a distance, he was the typical writer of the Communist era eager to create a name of his own in the field and a career. He starts working for a magazine in a different city (Cluj-Napoca), then he moves on into the capital and goes through all the stages until he ends up working for the most prominent youth newspaper.

The articles he signed in the period of time 1960-1962 also reveal the social activities of the time. The author, and it was not just him, used to write in support of the Romanian Communist Party, he described in favorable words and phrases the politicians during elections (example: "the policy of our party in terms of the socialist transformation of agriculture is thriving. Peasants say that clearly and are very proud of it."⁶⁴), whereas collectivization was presented as being very good and efficient (they wouldn't explain how collectivization came into being and all the related abuses); it was many times that they brutally attacked in writing the rich and the royal family, presenting information in various contexts (be it agriculture, culture or the social life of people); corruption was presented as a phenomenon of the former system; it is also worth mentioning the articles we identified in which the author uses as a source of inspiration the speeches of the party leader. As a comparison, our current newspapers are full of articles about young people working in famous IT companies, whereas, at the beginnings of Communism in Romania, the articles focused on subjects about young workers who were in the process of building a bright future for themselves.

⁶⁴ Ion Brad, *What voters and their candidates have to say*, in *Scânteia tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3665, February 26, 1961, p. 3.

As his articles only had a few ideas/opinions different from the communist beliefs (especially from a religious point of view; an example in this respect is the article “a good farmer makes a good farm” published in *Scântea tineretului*, XVII, 2nd series, no. 3663, February 24, 1961, p. 3), we cannot say that Brad tried in a way or another to fight against the communist censorship. Furthermore, him writing partially communist articles for *Luceașărul* (1958-1960) and later on his intense political activity for *Scântea tineretului* (1960-1962) put the author in the category of the journalists close to the regime. That’s why (this may not have been just a random thing), in 1961, Ion Brad became a member of the party, which may be seen as a reward of the party for all those who got politically involved. Based on this article, further studies can be completed, such as: describing in the press elections during Communism; how enemies of the communists were described in the press; anti-monarchy propaganda in the communist press.

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