

THE EVOLUTION OF NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU'S CULT OF PERSONALITY IN SCÂNTEIA NEWSPAPER

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ABSTRACT. In December 2019, Romania celebrates 30 years of liberty, after the fallout of communism, as a result of the revolution which started on December 16, 1989. This paper aims to draw the evolution of the cult of personality in the *Scânteia* newspaper, through analysis of its three important steps: the beginning, the highest level, and the downfall. Also, it was conducted a detailed discourse analysis, so the subtleties of the language were revealed, which were essential for the evolution of the cult. The articles were analyzed in detail, to observe the descriptions and the prases given to the Romanian president. The analysis also focused on the days after the start of the revolution and the fall of communism, in order to compare the articles about Nicolae Ceaușescu.

Keywords: *communism, Ceaușescu, Scânteia, personality cult, press.*

Introduction

Communism was 44 years in the Romanian history, being as well one of the most disputed ones after the fall of the regime. Nicolae Ceaușescu was the president of the country between 1965 and 1989, therefore around him was built a very strong personality cult. This study aims to analyze how the positive image of Nicolae Ceaușescu was built by one of the most important newspapers existing in that

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time: *Scânteia* (in translation, *The Spark*). Over a few years, the personality of the Romanian leader was developed into a real cult.

In order to gain the popularity that could ensure him the authority to establish his vision on the way society works, Nicolae Ceaușescu used the newspapers. The press created the belief that he enjoyed the total support of the people, being the most suitable for the position he held. During the last years of communism, there were articles in which he was no longer an ordinary person, but he was deified.

A lot of instruments were used over the time, to promote the cult of personality. This paper analyzes the strategies by which defects were blurred and Nicolae Ceaușescu's qualities were pulled to the extreme.

Nicolae Ceaușescu – a brief biography

Nicolae Ceaușescu (January 26, 1918-December 25, 1989) was born in Scornicești village, county of Olt, in a family with 10 children. After finishing school in the village, at the age of 11, he moved to Bucharest, where he became the apprentice of a shoemaker.

Articles and books written in the communist years claimed that his career in Romanian politics begun at the age of 12, when he joined the revolutionary movement, following that at the age of 15 he became a member of the Romanian Communist Party (PCR). A few years after the fallout of the communism, in 1992, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, former president of the Council of Ministers of the Romanian Communist Party, gave an interview in which he talked about the entire communist period. Asked if it is true that the president started his revolutionary fight at the age of 12, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, said that "his father may have sent him with sheep on the meadows at the time, and for the intellectuals who wrote his biographies, that meant revolutionary movement..." (Betea, Maurer and the world of yesterday. Testimonies about the Stalinization of Romania 2001, 204).

In 1933, Ceaușescu was arrested for communist agitation during a strike. In 1934 another three arrests follow, for the accession

to the communists, judged for the incitement to strikes in 1933. Thus, he came to be known by the authorities as a dangerous communist agitator, an active promoter of communist and anti-fascist propaganda material. In 1936 he was arrested again and imprisoned for two years in the Doftana prison (Gruia 2009).

After the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Nicolae Ceaușescu was elected the President of Romania, in 1965, after the 9th Congress of the PCR.

Maurer also talked about Ceaușescu's personal life, describing his wife, who also developed a cult of personality over the years: "Elena Ceaușescu, before she married him, lived with I don't know how many [men]. She also had two children – I don't know with whom. [...] He raised them, but she only knows with whom she made them. Ceaușescu adopted them when he married her [...], for the people not gossiping about the fact that she was not a virgin." (Deletant 1998, 85)

Nicolae Ceaușescu's policy focused on reducing the country's external debt through measures such as limiting utilities or food, increasing productivity in agriculture or increasing prices.

The cult of personality

The cult of the personality was one of the central elements of the communist political regime. As Manuela Marin also explains in her book, *Origin and evolution of the cult of personality of Nicolae Ceaușescu*, the definition of the cult of personality implies the orientation on two levels. First, it involves "a propaganda campaign, initiated, planned and controlled, which has an individual in its center, most often the leader of a state or a political formation". This means that, by public means, a positive image of the person will be promoted, and the audience will be convinced of the exceptional character and the extraordinary qualities possessed. In such a process, all the press is involved, being forced to

publish only positive articles about that person. On the other hand, Marin points out that in order for the cult to work, there must be a single person in the center of such a campaign (Marin 2008, 30).

President Nicolae Ceaușescu benefited of an impeccable image, numerous positive articles about him, which dominated the Romanian press, by submitting it to the party, by establishing a favorable law. The cult of personality has gradually ascended, reaching very high peaks, in the last years of communism. The idea comes from other communist states. In 1971 Nicolae Ceaușescu, paid a visit to China and North Korea, from where he returned with the ideas that contributed to the solidification of a cult of personality, already existing in Romania, in an incipient form. Impressed by the welcoming reception he had in China and North Korea, by the thousands of people who greeted him with banners on which there were written only good wishes, Ceaușescu returned to the country, and he introduced new measures. Just a month after returning from Korea, the dictator published on the front page of *Scînteia* the new program of measures, which has remained in history under the name of the July Theses (Andriescu 2014).

Even if it did not happen to a high extent, the cult of personality of Nicolae Ceaușescu existed before he visited China and North Korea. The moment when it debuted can be considered the moment when he condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the state members of the Warsaw Treaty. "The speech delivered by Nicolae Ceaușescu in front of those gathered in the Palace Square (August 21, 1968), marked the beginning of the manifestation of the cult of personality of the Romanian leader", because he became even more popular, enjoying the support of the Romanians (Marin 2008, 83).

Afterward, the cult of personality also evolved by consolidating, more and more, the power in Ceaușescu's hands. Many leaders, mainly former supporters of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, withdraw from the PCR, therefore Nicolae Ceaușescu built his power base and emphasized his role as a leader.

As in the case of Kim Ir Sen, the magnitude of the cult of Nicolae Ceaușescu's personality allowed him to promote his own family among the party. Thus, his wife, Elena Ceaușescu, also came to enjoy a cult of personality along with her husband.

Propaganda was the instrument used for reaching the masses in order to gain the desired sympathy. Being used persuasively, it had the expected results, based on people's appreciation towards Ceaușescu. Eugen Denize (2006, 331) wrote, in an article about communist propaganda and agitation, that the party selected and prepared propagandists to convey its messages. The same article explains that special attention was paid to these activists' training, because they had to have solid knowledge on the socialist economy, but also of literature, in order to transmit the information attractively, simple, but plastic as well. After they were trained, the propagandists had the role of educating the citizens in the communist spirit, through various lessons and seminars. After rewriting Ceaușescu's biography, the propagandists made the connection between the president's real image and its final projection unnoticeable. "No matter how big the inconsistencies of his politics, which aim to consolidate and perpetuate his power, he has always managed to justify what he does through propaganda", as Ute Gabanyi (2000, 87-8) shows.

Finally, a part of the cult involved convincing the Romanians that Ceaușescu is appreciated and even considered a model by international personalities. Anneli Ute Gabanyi (2000, 89) questions the veracity of statements made by politicians such as Richard Nixon, who, after his visit to Romania, would have said: "Why Romania? Because president Ceaușescu is there and we can learn something from him. He contributes to solving the most acute global problems" or by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher, who supposedly said: "I was impressed by the personality of president Ceaușescu, and especially by the man who is in charge of Romania". Another example would be the Indian publication *Neuer Weg*, which called Ceaușescu a humanist, philosopher and exemplary communist thinker. Mark Almond (1988,

24) draws attention to Nicolae Ceaușescu's cynicism: "His flattery in the western states and his attention to every detail of comfort during his visits... his duplicity and cynicism of unusual intensity." Visits to other communist states, but also the reception of foreign politicians in Romania have always been of high importance for Ceaușescu. As proof of its intense international policy, there were 103 official visits abroad and 110 that Ceaușescu received, while he was the president of Romania.

Legislation of the communist press

In 1974, the press was the subject of strict legislation. The law (3/1974 press law 1978), adopted by the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Romania, subjects the Romanian press to rules meant to serve the interests of the Romanian Communist Party. Starting with the first article of the 3/1974 law, the role of the press was clearly explained: to permanently advocate for the application of the communist principles and for the promotion of the progress in all domains, existing or not. The wooden language, characteristic of this regime, is used. In the third paragraph of this first article, it is stated that the press must massively disseminate valuable ideas and initiatives, contribute through its entire activity to the development of the multilaterally developed socialist society.

The second article of the same law brings more clarity, stating that the press carries out its activity under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party. Thus, the question of the press's objectivity is raised, considering the subordination of the press towards PCR. Paradoxically, the next article of the law ensures a pseudo-freedom of the press, ensured by the Constitution, which obviously could not exist, due to the previous provisions.

But the attributions and functions of the press went beyond informing or promoting and supporting ideas of PCR. The press was responsible for educating young people in the communism spirit, for instilling the values and ideas with which they must grow.

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In article 14 of the law, there is a new climax regarding the role of the press. It becomes responsible for the general well-being of society, for removing all that is bad and for restoring balance when it is disturbed.

The second section of the law clarified the right to edit articles and the idea of censorship comes into play. Article 17 grants political institutions the right to edit newspapers, according to unspecified criteria.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that the journalist was protected by the 3/1974 law. Article 44 states that it is forbidden to exercise any pressure and intimidation actions against the journalist.

The Romanian media landscape and communist censorship

The communist Romanian press experienced two distinct periods during the leadership of Nicolae Ceaușescu. Until 1971, a liberalization took place, and new publications appeared, in addition to the existing ones. The situation changed later, the media landscape being unrecognizable in the last years of communism, when numerous publications were closed, and the remaining ones became tools of the Communist Party.

Thus, at the beginning of the communism period, the Romanian press included numerous publications, carefully supervised by PCR, which even organized courses for journalists. A journalism school was also set up in Bucharest, as a proof of the attention paid to the press, by a party that needed its control. The most important such newspaper was *Scânteia*, followed by *România Liberă* (Rad, *Incursions in the History of the Romanian Press* 2008, 163). After 1971, the media landscape experienced changes. Following the Congress of Political Education and Socialist Culture in 1976, it was established that the press has many shortcomings, so it was decided to officially end the censorship.

Despite this decision, "in reality, as proved in practice, this measure was a farce, the official censorship being replaced by an unofficial one, much more drastic" (Rad, *Incursions in the History of the Romanian*

Press 2008, 164). Over time, it was forbidden to divide the dictator's name into syllables or write it on different lines. There were also printing mistakes, which resulted in the dismissal of the people who committed them. An example is found in the newspaper *Făclia* when, by separating the syllables of the word tiring, the prefix *un* was omitted. Therefore, the result was: "the tiring activity of Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu". The journalist was automatically fired (Rad 1999, 179).

Wooden language in Romanian press

Used especially in totalitarian regimes, the wooden language has its origins in Czarist Russia. It then expanded to communist totalitarianism and Nazism, providing examples of linguistic voluntarism that can be included in the log of the wooden language. "We are not talking to say something, but to achieve a certain effect", said Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Nazi Public Propaganda, quoted by Lavinia Betea (2009, 179)

Regarding the wooden language consolidated in Romania, it dominated Ceaușescu's speeches, press articles or telegrams, received and sent, by the president. This language was characterized primarily by hyperbole and superlatives. Also, there was a substantivization of the discourse, to evade the accuracy of the verb and to induce the equivocation of timelessness. Also, the impersonal and passive constructions dominated the discourses, as well as the predilection for comparatives and the excessive use of the imperative mode (Betea 2009, 182).

Françoise Thom (1993, 105) says that the wooden language can lead to the creation of parallel reality and works on two levels: it dissociates the words of things and "pretends to compensate the loss of meaning, imagining another universe, totally and immediately significant, because it is structured like a language. This completely intelligible world must make one forget that the language that describes it has no meaning and that the entities that mobilize it have no existence."

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Research design

Methodology

The research method used in this paper is the qualitative content analysis, applied on the first and the last five years of cult of personality. The newspapers from January 26 were selected for analysis, because that was the dictator's birthday, when the cult of personality was at its highest. The first five years of the cult were identified based on a quantitative analysis, which shows that the year in which *Scânteia* started publishing articles dedicated to Nicolae Ceaușescu was 1973 (10 articles on January 26). The last five years of communism represented the climax of the cult of personality, when promoting the positive image of the president has reached its limits. It was also analyzed how Nicolae Ceaușescu's image changed after his death, through the same newspaper.

Research questions

In order to achieve a better understanding of how this newspaper built the image of the Romanian president, the analysis focused on the following research questions:

(RQ1) What type of articles were used by Scânteia to build the cult of personality?

(RQ2) Which were the most frequent characteristics of the dictator, promoted by Scânteia, contributing to the development of the cult of personality?

(RQ3) Did the texts have any essence or were they marked by the wooden language?

(RQ4) To what extent did Nicolae Ceaușescu's image changed after the fall of communism?

Results and discussion

The first years of the cult of personality

1973

In 1973, six of the eight pages of the newspaper *Scânteia* were dedicated to Nicolae Ceausescu. On the occasion of the 55 years of life and 40 years of revolutionary activity of the dictator, a joint meeting of the C.C. Executive Committee of the PCR, the State Council and the Council of Ministers, dedicated to the celebration of Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu was organized.

Scânteia published the entire congratulatory speech, delivered by Ion Gheorghe Maurer, who addresses with *dear comrade*, thanking Ceausescu for his special contribution to the development of Romania, emphasizing the status of savior of the people, a hero of the motherland. In the same speech, the dictator is attributed qualities such as fiery patriotism, internationalist spirit, communist humanism, as a result of dedicating his life to “serving the fundamental interests and aspirations of the people’s progress and well-being”.

Formulations such as “consistency with which you act for the continuous improvement of the organization and management of society”, “we all value the firmness and consistency with which you advocate for the strengthening of friendship and collaboration with all socialist countries” or “we all know and admire the firmness with which you fight for the promotion of the principles of socialist ethics and equity”, appear very frequently, which contributes to the construction of a cult of personality, because the dictator seems to be loved by the whole country, his image being built immaculately. Assuming that the entire people love their leader is a clear sign of building the personality cult. The idea of a patriotic defender of the country, who deserves to be honored for dedicating his life to this purpose, is also emphasized.

The speech delivered by Nicolae Ceausescu is also published. He talked about the hardships he had to overcome, and the gaps

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Romania had before his leadership. His speech is marked by modesty, saying that he has always endeavored to fulfill his duties, without affirming that he has succeeded. This achievement is only suggested.

1974

In the eight pages of the newspaper on January 26, 1974, there is no article referring to the birthday of Nicolae Ceausescu. The first page of the newspaper is dominated by economic and social topics. There are, however, telegrams for/from other presidents. First of all, two letters are published, having as recipient Polish politicians. A standardized content is noticeable, dominated by the wooden language, and the letter received by Nicolae Ceausescu is almost identical to the one he sent. The telegrams seem slightly different. In Moktar Ould Daddah's letter (the president of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania), a certain sincerity of the sent feelings can be observed, due to the formulation of a response to the received letter, which shows that it has been considered. Also, the formulations are more personal, they are not so strongly marked by the wooden tongue. On the last page of the newspaper are published three more telegrams, sent by President Ceausescu to *His Excellency, Mr. V. V. Giri*, President of the Republic of India, to Sir Paul Meera Caedwalla Hasluck, Governor-General of Austria, and to Edward Gough Whitlam (Prime Minister of Australia). The publication of these telegrams aims to highlight the international status of Ceaușescu and the fact that he is appreciated by other leaders of states, which brings an extra positive image and helps to build the cult of personality.

1975

In *Scânteia* of January 26, 1975, there are references to the birthday of President Nicolae Ceausescu, both in articles and in telegrams. On the first page is published an article called *The Communist Example*, in

which, as the title suggests, a portrait of the ideal communist is made, along with the characteristics of a member of the communist society. The article continues on the second page of the newspaper and it is one of the very few articles of praise in which the president is also quoted.

The fact that, in the same sentence, Ceaușescu's name and the words "communist's moral profile" are the only letters written in bold characters, highlights that the qualities presented apply to himself. Although these features are not directly attributed to him, the suggestion is clear. Furthermore, Ceausescu is compared to the great personalities of Romanian history, being presented as a continuator of them.

Two telegrams were published on the same page, along with an article about the visit of Vladimir Brezhnev, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, who expressed his wishes and good thoughts, "a message of friendship with wishes for health, long life, and new successes. The two telegrams published in *Scântea* this year were received from Iosip Broz Tito, president of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, and from lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho, president of the CC Presidency of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam.

The topic of the last article from this issue, dedicated to Nicolae Ceausescu, was his activity as a writer, also published abroad. Until 1975, 34 volumes were translated into 13 languages. In the article *Expressions of high esteem for socialist Romania, for the president of our country*, the opinions of people abroad are presented. For example, Dr. Banko Petkovici, a representative of a publishing house in Belgrade, says that he intended to publish the book *Selected Writings of President Nicolae Ceausescu* due to "the growing collaboration between Yugoslavia and Romania and due to the great interest of the Yugoslav public opinion for the personality and the work of the president of the neighboring country". Another example, presented in the same article, is Nicoleta Tetti, the general manager of a publishing house in Milan, who believed that Ceausescu's work is worth reading because he is a state leader and an important revolutionary, at international level.

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1976

In 1976, on Nicolae Ceausescu's birthday, *Scânteia* was not published. The next day's edition contained 6 pages, but no article was written regarding the president's birthday. The only appreciative article occupied the second and third pages of the newspaper, and the praises were not regarding his birthday, but his activity, in general.

The telegrams were also published in 1976, expressing feelings of appreciation, good thoughts and unlimited love towards Nicolae Ceausescu, on behalf of all the citizens in the county. The cult of personality was developed by such articles because the public could read that the president is appreciated by other politicians, workers or ordinary citizens. The veracity of all the letters from a lot of counties can be questioned, primarily due to their structure, which betrays the existence of a predetermined model that had to be respected, which means that certain content was imposed. Secondly, the wooden language was used, which does not allow the transmission of a consistent message, but the same meaningless collocations, which have become clichés due to excessive repetition.

1977

A year later, the January 26, 1977 edition of *Scânteia* newspaper did not include, through the 6 pages, any articles referring to the birthday of Nicolae Ceausescu. The only references to this event were in the two telegrams received from other state leaders. The article intended to give praise to Nicolae Ceausescu is called *Communist Leadership*, which talks about the ideal way to run a country. Similarly to *The Communist Example*, written two years earlier, it has the same construction: it presents the ideal way to lead, and right after that Ceausescu is given as an example, which suggests that he is the one who implements that ideal plan to rule the country.

The telegrams received by Nicolae Ceausescu on the occasion of his birthday became normality. With the evolution of this phenomenon, their evolution and formulation were even more ambiguous, and the wooden tongue was ubiquitous. The telegrams (both received and sent) started to have the same structure, the same order of ideas.

The last article in this issue of *Scânteia*, dedicated to Nicolae Ceausescu, is about the contribution that the Romanian president made to the whole world through his books.

The last years of the cult of personality

1985

In the last five years of communism, things were completely different regarding Nicolae Ceausescu's image in the *Scânteia* newspaper. The articles dedicated to him occupied a much larger space than in the first five years when the cult of personality started to grow. Also, the homage poems started to appear, and the number of telegrams the president received was significantly increased. Also, the front page was always in colors, as were the photos with the president, whose number increased significantly.

In 1985, on Nicolae Ceausescu's birthday, almost 7 of the 8 pages contained only articles on this topic. In this edition, there were also 10 photographs of him. Also, seven homage poems have been published.

On the first page, printed in red letters, this message was published: "To the hero of the country, the beloved leader of the party, comrade Nicolae Ceausescu: fervent appreciation, honor, and love from the whole nation." There is a significant difference from the previous newspapers, in the way the messages for the president were transmitted. While in the first five years of the beginning of the cult of personality they were almost completely absent, now they dominate almost the entire newspaper transmitting.

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In the main article on the first page, *From the bottom of our hearts, Happy birthday!*, the author talked about *The Ceausescu Epoch*, the name that the period during his presidency received. Moreover, the author of the article speaks on behalf of the people, saying that they will follow their leader and the Party "on the bright path of living our golden dream, the communism". The cult of personality reached such a high level that the president and the Party pretend to be loved by all citizens since they are willing to do anything for them.

In another article on the front page, it is explained that democracy represents the power of the people. It is also published an article about the dictator's life, which is described by pointing out sacrifices he has made through his revolutionary involvement, highlighting that he is a man who fought for freedom and for ordinary citizens.

A group of five homage poems is published and on page six, under the name of *Thoughts for the Hero of a Homeland of Heroes*. In one of them, *Soldiers Forever*, the author expresses feelings of devotion towards Nicolae Ceausescu, whom he calls a hero ("We have a tricolor! We have a country! / At the helm of the country we have a hero!") or "the most beloved Romania's son". It is worth noting that these homage poems were written not only by Romanians, which indicates that their purpose was to show that Nicolae Ceausescu is loved by all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity. The paper dedicated, at this point, more than one issue to the dictator's birthday. For instance, in 1985, the telegrams were published on January 30.

On January 26, 1986, on the first page of the *Scântea* were published 4 articles and homage poetry. Also, there is a birthday wish, written in red letters, above the frontispiece: "The people of socialist Romania wish, from their hearts to their beloved leader, Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu, with unwavering love and appreciation, Happy Birthday!" The main article on the first page is *To the Great Hero of the Country, High Honor*, in which the author writes about Ceaușescu using appellations as *hero* or *the brilliant leader of the destinies of the socialist nation*.

Not only journalists or employees of the newspaper were published in *Scântea*. Being a PCR “organ”, as it was self-titled on the frontispiece of each issue, this newspaper was a tool of communist propaganda. As a result, members of the Party also published laudatory articles, contributing to the development of the personality cult.

1986

In a poem on the first page of *Scântea* (January 26, 1986) Nicolae Ceausescu is raised to an almost divine level, being considered the one who created an environment in which Romania could keep its head up, noble and courageous.

In the 26th January 1986 edition, no telegrams received from other presidents were published. But the homages continued to be published until the end of the month. The fifth page of the January 30 edition was the one on which the President's telegrams were published, on the occasion of his birthday. 18 foreign politicians wrote to Nicolae Ceausescu in 1986 (from countries such as Bulgaria, Morocco, Argentina, Brazil, Korea, Liberia, Austria, Venezuela, etc.).

1987

The issue from 26th January 1987 could not be found, but the analysis focused on other days since the praiseworthy articles were published from 25th to 30th January. Two homage poems were published in the first newspaper. One of them, *Brilliant Revolutionary Guide for Present and Future*, a total submission of the people towards the president can be observed, along with unbounded appreciation. The second poem describes all the difficulties that Nicolae Ceausescu had to endure until he became so appreciated. The poem is conceived as a story, in which the hero is oppressed until his kindness is acknowledged. On 30th January, 21 telegrams received from leaders of states such as Bulgaria, Jordan, Morocco, San Marino, Korea, Egypt, and others were published.

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1988

"Happy Birthday, Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu, glorious leader of the party and the country!" – this message opens the 26th January 1988 issue of *Scânteia*, written in capital letters, above the frontispiece.

An interesting case can be found in the previous edition, 25th January, in which the poem Hero of Peace was published. In the case of this poem, there was a printing error and some lyrics were eliminated. The acrostic was supposed to form the name Ceausescu Nicolae, but following the technical error resulted in CEAUȘESCOLAE, which roughly translates into Ceausescu nothing.

The appreciative articles continued until the end of the month, but this time the 32 telegrams were published on January 28. One of them was received from Yasser Arafat, the president of Palestine. He also sent a telegram the previous year, the differences being made only by the different order of some sentences. Except that, the letters were identical, which shows the lack of interest and the wooden language at its finest.

1989

In 1989, the last Nicolae Ceausescu's birthday as president of the country, the main article on the front page sent a message of *deep love and esteem, firm revolutionary commitment*. The article describes the achievements of Nicolae Ceausescu and expresses, once again, the appreciation of the people.

In another article on the first page, the greetings addressed to Nicolae Ceausescu by Mihail Gorbachev are presented.

As for the telegrams, the 26 of them were published on January 28. Yasser Arafat sent one this year as well, very similar to the other two: the same length and order of ideas.

Nicolae Ceaușescu's image in *Scântea*, after his death

Between 16th and 25th December 1989, the Romanian society was marked by the Revolution which led to the fall of communism. This major event culminated with the execution of the presidential couple, on December 25.

The last published edition of the *Scântea* was on December 22, 1989. In the next two days, the newspaper appeared under the name of the *Scântea poporului* (in translation, *The spark of the people*), and from December 26 it was called *Adevărul* (*The truth*), which is published nowadays as well. Both the first issue of *Scântea poporului* and the second one contained, in their entirety, articles on the unfolding of the Revolution in the country.

Regardless that a few months ago *Scântea* published numerous telegrams of congratulations of president on the occasion of his birthday, critical opinions of personalities abroad were now published: "UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, welcomed the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime in Romania" or "Jaques Delors, the president of the EEC Commission, specified that Removal from Ceausescu's leadership is a formidable thing. It is a reason for celebration". The second issue of *Scântea poporului* encouraged Romanian people to join the Revolution: "Citizens of Romania, comrades! [...] Participate with all the courage in the armed fight, do a unique, powerful front, to immediately and definitively defeat the bestial resistance of the terrorists". Yesterday's hero is considered a terrorist today. The one who just a few days ago was presented as being the most beloved son of the homeland is now considered a leader who must be defeated by the citizens he leads, in order for them to regain their freedom.

"We are free!" This is the beginning of an article in the article *The Imperative of the Moment*, from December 24, 1989. This article describes the feeling of the Romanian people to be free, for which they thank the army: "We greet, we recognize ourselves, we encourage each

other with V for Victory. It is the most beautiful, most exciting moment of our modern history." The same author says that the happiness cannot be complete until those who served the former president are eliminated: "Ceausescu's killers, these bandits formed by the image and resemblance of the dictatorship, continued to reap human lives". Therefore, Ceausescu, who was presented as a model for his people, now became the coordinator of a terrorist gang.

Adevărul published a column named *The Lie Policy*, where the journalists wrote about Nicolae Ceausescu's lies. By far, the harshest article is *Năpârcile* (*The asps*), in which the author uses an aggressive language about the real status of the former leader. In this article, neither his name nor his wife is mentioned, *him* or *her* being the only used words. Ceausescu's oratory is ironized here, along with Elena Ceausescu's abilities: "He called himself, with the most abject shamelessness, the most beloved and estimated. And she added the title of the best scientist. From the globe. She just omitted: she could not write, and she was barely able to read. And he spoke like illiterate peasants [...]". The author also ironically refers to the idea of *the new man*, promoted by Ceausescu's servants, associating him with Hitler: "They were trying to carve you after the image and likeness of the new man, invented by their führer, who was the apprentice of a shoemaker". Then he talks about Ceausescu in a very harsh language: "Coward. Disgusting. The killer. But there are no expressions measuring this bastard and our rage, in no language on earth. Maybe just his own name, which went beyond everything that humanity has had more horrible so far, in terms of sinister connotations. Stalin? Hitler? Helpless boys. Even the devil is not as bad. Ceausescu? The most detestable, the ugliest, the more awful word spoken in the vocabulary of the whole world."

Conclusions

As shown through this paper, the newspaper *Scântea* was one of the tools by which the image of president Nicolae Ceausescu was promoted very intensely.

As one of the most important national newspapers, it was distributed to a large number of people, so messages from the president or party could be very easily propagated among the population. The credibility of these messages is questionable. Given that the newspaper is entitled Organ of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, the objectivity of political messages could not be expected.

The types of pieces that massively contributed to the development of the personality cult were the articles about the dictator's life and his achievements, but also about his incommensurable contribution to the development of the society. There were also published telegrams from other presidents and prime ministers, in order to prove that Ceaușescu was appreciated abroad. Last but not least, the number of homage poems has grown, especially in the last years of communism.

The most frequent characteristics of the dictator, promoted by *Scântea*, contributing to the development of the cult of personality were those of a man who fought for his country, who became the most loved citizen of Romania, a hero and, paradoxically, a symbol of freedom. The climax was reached after 1985, when the image of Nicolae Ceausescu was no longer just a positive one, but also unrealistic. In the articles from this period, all the characteristics of the cult of personality can be found. He was considered the most important personality in the country, he was called the hero of the nation, the most beloved son of his people, and he was considered a genius. Moreover, Nicolae Ceausescu was considered the liberator and savior of the people, the person who should get the credits for the flourishing situation of Romania.

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All the articles and telegrams were marked by the wooden language. The vague expressions and the lack of explanations for certain affirmations made the articles hard to understand. Furthermore, this type of language was more visible in the telegrams. Their structure was strict and rigid, so everyone fits into a well-established pattern: they started with the birthday wishes, they continued to express happiness for the understanding between the two countries and ended with the hope that these relationships will continue and develop in the future.

After the death of Nicolae Ceausescu, his image undergoes radical changes. *Scântea poporului* and *Adevărul* had entire editions dedicated to destroying the images that they have built meticulously for 25 years. With the outbreak of the Revolution, the newspaper went out of its way and urged the people to participate in the fight for the removal of the dictatorship. The articles about Ceausescu were written in a very harsh way: from genius and hero, he became a thief, terrorist and criminal. The journalists who promoted her positive image became, suddenly, promoters of the anti-communist struggle.

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