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Transhistorical views over the journalism as a profession

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Abstract

In this paper we aim to describe the basics, the roots, the genetic heritage of the today Romanian journalism, as a profession and epistemic object. The idea came to us from this need to offer an answer, an explanation regarding the necessity of a strong development of the journalistic education. The journalistic education has continually to confront scepticism, some pretty noisy denial from the journalists. Our researches led have led us intro the historical area, in the communist age, and the findings were really unexpected for the new generations. We have showed that the communist system not only knew what the power of the press really means, but it looked (and it managed) to control it in the minutest detail - from its birth (at school) to the newsrooms.

Keywords: education, journalism, communism, propaganda, information

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1 THE RETICENCE OF THE JOURNALISTS

From the formation of the Journalism specialization of the University of Craiova we saw a pretty severe and obvious reticence from the professional journalist. This reticence was coming with a minimum 10 years of working in the press. The interviewed journalists didn't study journalism, but most of them followed philological schools. They learned how to be a journalist in the newsroom, by imitating and by self-education. This situation was /is valid for the Romanian local journalism, but also for the Romanian national journalism. When we asked what a journalist should do, most of the professionals say he/she must have gut, cheek, writing skills and general knowledge. You don't have to go to the university to learn how to do journalism they say. Eventually, if someone follows some university classes, it should look for something complementary to the profession – the journalistic profession isn't something that to be seriously studied.

2 ON THE ROLE OF JOURNALISM DURING THE COMMUNISM ERA

It is a fact that the Romanian journalism has experienced an evolution (if we can say so) in leaps, with sudden and even violent changes. After the dawn of the two world wars, the Romanian journalist was turned into a propaganda tool. After 1947 the journalistic information approached the status of a kind of proto-PR, in fact a deployment of propaganda forces whose consequences we feel today. During communism, journalism had the role of collaboration and facilitation (Clifford G. Christian & all, 2009) of the transfer of messages from Establishment to the public, to the population.

We use the phrase "message transfer" rather than "information" because the journalist was just a targeting channel, not a producer himself. The communist journalist did not offer an interpretation, a contextualization, a meaning. We use the term "population" rather than the public to name the recipient of the message because, as the journalist had the status of a channel, the recipient wasn't equally regarded as a text-independent public with a critical, detached attitude. The addressee was a passive entity to which some messages had to be communicated.

The Communist model of the press to which we refer (as it was described by F. Siebert & all, 1956) marked, had an impact on Romanian journalistic DNA. The press in communism also meant the exercise of an absolute control implied by the idea of imposing the press as an instrument of power. Therefore, official ideology, official norms, were found in all journalistic domains - in the area of hard journalism (after the new terminological conventions), as well as in the area of soft journalism. Of course, if we talk about control, we're talking about administrative control. In fact, journalism was an enterprise like any other - in the aspect of administrative representation - centralized, with fixed structures, created and

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imposed by the centre, with decisions taken outside the editorial management (Nerone, 1995; Phillips, 2016; Vaca-Baqueiro, 2017). The political administration decides the editions, editorial structures, staff policies. Of course, we are also talking about the ideological implications, the stake of this control (Radu, 2014; Arce & Salgado, 2016). The themes imposed, the accepted themes, censorship and self-censorship are concepts that denote an *informational Golem*, a modelling of a devitalized instrument created by the absolute power and subject to absolute control. We emphasize the existence of language control, paralanguage, control of praxemics and all that means publishing (written, spoken, and seen).

The testimonies show this pressure and, implicitly, this fear (Dejica, 2004; Ilie, 2014, Simon & Dejica-Cartis, 2015). Fear has also begun to produce for victims the need to contribute to their own confinement. The abusive interpretations of the regulator had the most shocking effect - self-censorship. Another effect, with equally serious implications in the long run, was the control to call it collegially, in a struggle for survival that moved the centre of attention from one's own performance, to self-suggestion on the other's shoulders. The small powerful locals or the editors self-proposed as the absolute representatives of the central power. In the name of this (self) investment, individual oppressive energies have doubled the great political oppression.

3 THE COMMUNIST SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

This periplus in the brutal world of communism may seem to be far removed from the initial objectives of this article. In our opinion, the mentality and the type of behaviour created and developed during communism have marked and continue to mark Romanian journalism. The rush to get into patterns, to respond to real or unnecessary imperatives, a sort of hurried conformism, all these attitudes are results that we find today in the journalistic world. When we talk about the journalistic world, we refer to all the entities involved in journalistic communication: journalists, the public, and teachers. During communism, there was the possibility of studying journalism at the tertiary level, within the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Academy. From the brief historical voyage, it will be seen that the politicization of journalism is not based on subjective interpretation, but was the result of a project (in the jargon of today, as it was then called) very well developed. In 1945, at the initiative of Ana Pauker, a higher education institution, called the Romanian Communist Party Workers' University, was set up. The institution had several names.

For example, between 1952 and 1966, the Higher School of Party "Ştefan Gheorghiu", from 1966, the Academy of Social and Political Sciences "Ştefan Gheorghiu" and since 1971 the "Ştefan Gheorghiu" Social-Political Education Academy, The Academy first comprised three faculties: the Faculty of Philosophy and Political Sciences (with fields of philosophy / sociology and political sciences),

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the Faculty of Economics (with directions such as: economic organization and leadership, global economy and general economy) And the Faculty of History of the Workers' Movement.

The duration of the courses was four years and five years without frequency. In 1971, it received two other newly established institutes: the Central Institute for the Training of Managing Directors in the Economy and State Administration. The second institute aimed at training the cadres in social-political governance issues. Here were adopted the principles of the terrifying "scientific socialism". Here the journalistic (Romanian) education has developed. In fact, as the historians show, it is the only place where specialists in the field were formed. Here was the "journalist qualification". I emphasize the following aspect, which, apparently, the Communists understood it better than it is understood today: all the employees from the county and central press with other specializations were sent to the post-graduate courses of this faculty. The attention paid to this profession was maximum. Besides attention, we added the profound understanding of the possibilities of this profession if we consider that the profession of journalist was assimilated to the "political activist in the field of the press" (Drăguşin, 2009). The students of this school were the pillars on which post-communist journalism was built, with all that this meant: science of text, phrasing, manipulation, but with no managerial training (Betea, 2009; Dragomir, 2014).

THE TEXT AND ITS RECEPTORS DURING THE COMMUNIST ERA

This DNA information is also added to the public DNA. Let us not forget the particular status of the discourse during communism. We are talking about a bicephalic receiver: the general public and the censor. But both readings are deeply ideological. The type of reading was esoteric. Both the audience and the censor looked for the double meaning, the true sense, and the interpretations. The authors themselves are clamping today on feeding this type of reception. Of course, we can have a fruitful discussion on this aesthetic, artistic discourse. And not very different things were at the level of journalistic discourse. But we immediately remember a much stricter control. However, we can see / accept some kind of complicity between the emitter and the recipient, but within barely perceptible limits. The journalistic material was devoted to nearly 100% of the country's leader and the Communist Party.

However, there was a segment of publications where political information was less present - in the last pages, at the end of a publication. Long after 1989, news readers began reading a publication from the last pages to the first. Most of the times, the former was completely ignored. Also, by over-squeezing with political information, through the mono-thematic field has created an effect of rejecting this information, and the interest goes further to external news.

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So, in addition to DNA mutations, the press was in 1989 with a great lack of credibility, with a high dose of histrionism, implicitly with the absence of an informational authority. The press has reborn in the public consciousness after 1989 with this character trait of sight: the potential of lies. The public knew that journalists lied; they were passive instruments in the hands of politicians. The public had no reason to believe that within 24 hours one could completely reinvent a totally different world.

4 CONCLUSION

Journalism-during-communism meant a special entity, a type of understanding of the profession closer to the field of public relations than the field of journalistic information. This professional entity was not the result of accidental, humorous impulses, but was a system construction that took into account both creation (school) and implementation (editorial). Communism intuited the force of journalistic energies and created an almost inexplicable system of control and domination.

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