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EDUCATION

Professional Training

High Schools And Technical Schools; Changes  
And Conditions.

SOURCE SALZBURG : Confidential Sources who attended schools  
in BUCHAREST until 1951. They left Rumania on 8 February 1953.

DATE OF OBSERVATION : Until the spring of 1951.

EVALUATION COMMENT : This is a first hand report on: technical schools; the propaganda made in school books for the Soviet system and against the West; the cells of the Young Workers' Union; the discrimination of those students who had attended in the past conferences in U.S. and French libraries in BUCHAREST. Most interesting is the reference to the poor quality paper, bad print and few photographs of such books as the "Geography of the Capitalistic Countries" as compared with the excellent paper and the first class print of the "Geography of the USSR and the Democratic Republics." The better part of the furnished details are confirmed. We agree with the Correspondent that certain parts of this report are sketchy because subsource, a 23-year-old girl and her 22-year-old brother, were not very interested in school activities. As German citizens they merely wanted to finish their schooling and have done with it.

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In 1948, the Rumanian school system underwent a drastic change. All schools were nationalized and general education

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high schools (so-called "theoretical" schools) were for the most part closed down. In their places technical high schools appeared. (There are now only 11 theoretical high schools left in BUCHAREST, according to Subsources). The old system of four years primary and eight years secondary schooling was changed to seven years primary and four years of high school. But then about a year ago, one of the technical high school years was dropped off, leaving only three. Subsources believe that the reason for shortening the high school curriculum was to give students a packaged education in as short a time as possible and get them out working.

But students don't go automatically from the seven years primary school into the high schools. They must pass special examinations, the stress of which is always on family background, social origin, etc. rather than marks. Neither do students always have their choice of either which high school they'll go to or what subjects they'll study. This is determined for them according to what specialists are needed at the moment and what openings exist. In the technical schools Subsources attended, they found such subjects as mathematics, history, geography, etc., were stressed less and less; while subjects that related more closely to one or another technical subject received new emphasis. Girl Sub-source, for example, was enrolled in a textile course, and so had to take aesthetics, the history of art, drawing, Russian, etc., at the sacrifice of the more general courses usually offered as a part of a high school curriculum. Even in the study of Rumanian (and, of course, the required Russian), the vocabulary and reading exercises concentrated on the particular technical field the student was studying. For Girl Subsource, there was little study of Rumanian literature as such; merely such terms as applied to weaving, styles tailoring, etc.

And both in her textbooks and from her teachers, Girl Subsource read and heard anti-Western statements. In discussing fabrics, her teacher would explain the superior quality of Eastern cloth, saying that the "Capitalistic West" tries to cover up its inferior quality cloth by using extra amounts of starch.

The West gets its knocks in other ways, too. In Subsource Boy's ninth class, he studied the geography of the West from a textbook entitled: "Geography of the Capitalistic Countries." In his 10th year, his geography book was called "Geography of the USSR and the Democratic Republics." This second book he describes as a first-class printing job, many photographs, excellent paper, etc. The first-mentioned book is just the opposite; badly printed, poor quality paper, few photographs. In the Russian geography book, the USSR was always described as the biggest and best, in all directions. And if the point is not made strong enough in the textbooks themselves, the student can always rely on the teacher for further blasphemy against the West. "Every

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single word they said about the West was anti-, anti-, anti-," he said.

In learning the Russian language, students concentrated mostly on grammar; reading was restricted, at least for the first two years, to elementary reading exercises. "Constitutional Law" and "Political Economy" were the two principle subjects in the political field that Subsource Boy was subjected to; Marx-Leninism was concentrated on more in the universities. (Incidentally, a special university for learning the Russian language and things Russian was opened in 1950 in what was formerly an office building, opposite CISMIGIU Park and the old LICEUL LAZAR, off the Blvd. Republicii). Subsource believes that kids must now start learning Russian in the first, second and third primary classes. French and German are still taught, too, but English is on the wane.

History, according to both Subsources, is just one lie after another. Beginning with the Pyramids and coming on down to the USSR today, the theme is always the same — capitalistic slave labor as opposed to Russia's method of freedom and enlightenment. The accent is always placed on various world revolutions; the most important dates on all history exams are 1779, 1848, 1917, 1821 (TUDOR VLADIMIRESCU), and some date in the seventeen hundreds when the revolutionary leaders HORIA, CLOSCA and CRISAN were active. The beginning of syndicates in the late 19th century is another important date, and syndicate history always appears on examinations. Subsources said further that history since 1944 gets more space in current books than the previous thousands of years put together. In a new Rumanian history book containing about 600 pages, more than 400 concern themselves with the last eight or nine years. Throughout which Russia is always pictured as Rumania's eternal and benevolent friend. History books are no longer written by single scholars, but are rather the product of cooperative efforts. Subsources believe there are certain governmental committees who are assigned the writing of text books. Older authors, too, had their works been revised by the regime. The common word for such "conversions" is "Reconsiderari" — many living authors have also reconsidered their attitude and are now writing according to the new pattern. The famous Rumanian poet EMINESCU, Mihail, for example, once wrote an anti-Russian poem (Doina). But it was taken out of his published works.

This continuous love for Russia in school subjects and hate for the West has made exam-taking easy nowadays, according to Subsources, do write and write against the US and England, the Atlantic Pact, Marshall Plan, etc., and a passing mark is yours. Boy Subsource reported that he got a good mark by merely saying all the nasty things he

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could think of about the "Capitalistic" countries.

Students must buy their own textbooks, but many of them don't. Some of them cost as much as 40 Lei, and this has led many students to rely on note-taking in class or book-borrowing in lieu of buying. Some very poor or orphaned pupils may get their books free. Neither Subsource ever heard of any special gratuity for a student merely because he was a Communist or a member of the Communist youth organizations.

As early as 1948-49, entrance to high schools and universities already depended on family background as well as excellence in studies, and Subsources believe that these "entrance requirements" have become more and more stringent. At the start of each new school year the student must bring in a new statement as regards his father's social origin, salary, his taxes, the property he owns, etc. The statement from the previous year won't suffice; his salary may have changed in the meanwhile. In 1950, Subsource Boy had to pay 6,000 Lei to go to high school, plus 40 per cent of this amount in order to take his final examinations. Subsource Girl had to pay 4,500 Lei to enter her textile high school.

#### Class Organization and the U.T.M.

The Rumanian youth organization, U.T.M. (Uniunea Tineretului Muncitor), plays an important role in schools as well as the young worker's Union. In fact, Subsource said the U.T.M. includes students because they are considered workers, even though they are in school. Students and workers alike must pay "dues" to the U.T.M. of a few Lei every month. Each week the student must write up and hand in to U.T.M. headquarters and or the local representative a list of how many hours brigade work he has performed which newspapers, books and magazines he has read, what movies he has seen, how many cartoons he has made for classroom walls, how many copies of SCANTEIA he has sold, how many hours he has spent in the library, how many hours spent at U.T.M. meetings, at sports, etc., in other words, a full report on each week's activities. When his performance is considered satisfactory, he receives a certificate to that effect. All students, said Subsource, are diligent about making out these weekly reports; the Communists to shine in Party eyes, and the non-Communists in order to stay out of trouble.

U.T.M.'s influence is felt in every school in BUCHAREST; every class, even, has its own U.T.M. organization, set up as follows:

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1. "Secretarul Organizatiei De Baza U.T.M.", who is the political leader of BIROUL U.T.M.

2. "Responsabil Organizatoric", organized on both the class and school level.

3. "Responsabil Cultural", who distributes reading material, organizes movies, etc.

4. "Responsabil Sport".

Then there is a group of AGITATORS, five or six appointed from each class, who work independently from the BIROUL U.T.M. They are usually trusted farmers' sons, according to Subsource, who are responsible for leading students in "Communist methods", as well as checking up on them. During school assembly periods, for example, they are scattered throughout the student audience and are charged with leading applause. They are thus responsible for student behavior and action. Subsource remembers that occasionally these agitators would give the signal to yell "Long Live STALIN!", but this did not happen often.

U.T.M. concerns itself with both in-school and out-of-school activities. In sports (which are the most liked and least political of all school functions), the Responsabil Sport oversees all student participation. It is he who organizes the cross-country runs which are a part of November 7 and May 1 celebrations (at such times, the whole student body will don shorts and go trotting through the streets, according to Subsource.) He is responsible, too, for his school's participation in the summer physical education displays which take place in the city's huge stadiums. Incidentally, each student can choose which sport he will take, physical education, gymnastics, track, folk dancing, etc. When a student reaches a certain degree of efficiency in his sport, he receives a pin with G.M.A. ("Gata Pentru Munca Si Apararea Patriei — "Ready for work and the Defense of the Fatherland") written on it. For students over 14 years of age, the pin reads G.M.A., for those under 14, F.G.M.A. (Be ready for work and Defence of the Fatherland.)

U.T.M. also plays a role in organization school dances, called Reunione Tovaraseasca, which are held two or three times a year in the theoretical high schools but not the technical ones. These dances are always well attended, despite the fact that no Western music is allowed. Polkas, waltzes and tangos are popular. Russian fox trots were once played, but no longer are.

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The U.T.M. plays a role, too, during summer vacations. Holidays are arranged for students in the mountains and lakes, or for special work projects away from the city. Those who don't leave the city may be called into U.T.M. clubrooms to participate in group discussions or readings; or they may be asked to take part in a U.T.M. activity being held in BUCHAREST itself. When the summer is over and students begin school in the fall, they report again to the U. T.M. a record of their summer's activities, listing as mentioned above, the books they've read, movies seen, work accomplished, et al.

And lastly, even the U.T.M. could not maintain student interest in Brigade work. Whereas most young people used to spend their Sundays helping clean ruins, build new buildings, maintain parks, etc., few of them are showing up for these tasks any more. The school agitators are supposed to arrange for an look after the recruitment for brigade work, but because no close checks were made, Subsources said neither they nor their friends ever went. Subsources knew of no records kept of their participation or lack of it, there were no house visits, and there was no order ever issued that they had to go. It was a voluntary business and when no one volunteered, the whole project died a natural death.

#### Fellow-Students

Describing his classmates, Subsource boy had the following to say about them:

"Of the 50 students in my senior class, about 10 of them were Communists. These 10 always stuck pretty close together and had a tendency to be clanish. The main reason, I suppose, was because the rest of us didn't want to have much to do with them. Their behavior was about the same as the other students, perhaps the main difference being that they talked more, appeared self-important and liked to envision themselves as leaders.

"These Communist students always got good marks in their studies and were fantastically well-informed on Marx and Stalin. While certain Jewish and Armenian students always got the highest marks in their studies, it was the Communist ones who always won school prizes. The reasons were obvious: They knew Marx inside and out and the rest of the student body didn't. Further, prizes were based on political activity as well as excellence in studies. When final grades were handed out, the

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teachers always consulted school political leaders, especially the above - mentioned Secretarul Organizatiei De Baza. This business of consulting with one student to give another a school grade shows to what extent teachers' authority has degraded in present-day Communist education.

"It is difficult to say what makes a Communist student tick. I tried to analyze them because I considered them dangerous and I wanted to know my enemy. But once you know who the enemy is you avoid him, so that the result is that I know next to nothing about them. I can only say that the less educated and the poorer the background of a boy was, the more susceptible he seemed to be to Communist ideology. Wherever parental authority seemed the least evident, such as in farm boys, the more ardent the student seemed to be. All of us, however, had to put on some kind of front in order to stay out of trouble, and that made evaluation of any one boy's motives more difficult."

Subsource said that there were a number of Korean students now studying in BUCHAREST, especially little kids. He said it was not uncommon to see them marching through the streets in rows or groups. Korean youngsters of all ages attend all of the U.T.M. meetings.

Finally, Subsource said he knew of certain students excluded from attending any school after they were arrested in 1949 for visiting the American or English reading room in BUCHAREST. Some time in 1949, another group of students was arrested in the French Library. And then one day in 1950, Subsource Boy's school was visited and thoroughly searched by the police. They were looking for detective stories, which were labeled as "examples of American decadence." All books found were confiscated and all students who had them given a verbal reprimand and had their names written down.

End.