

ITEM No.4612/53

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RUMANIA

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29 April

YOUTH
STANDARD OF LIVING
GENERAL MOOD
PROPAGANDA

Some Notes on Youth

SOURCE SALZBURG: Confidential subsources who left Rumania on 8 February 1953.

DATE OF OBSERVATION : Until 8 February 1953.

EVAL. COMMENT : This is a very comprehensive report on the state of mind of average youths in today's Rumania. The superficial influence of Communist slogans, membership of Communist-sponsored associations, work problems and social life are discussed in a very realistic and interesting way.

As soon as the Communists took over Rumania, they organized Rumanian youth into various groups of a transitory nature until the UTM -- identical with the Soviet Kom-somol -- finally came into being.

The marginal note on the resistance of the workers of "Progresul Textil" against a cut in wages is considered of utmost interest.

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Non-Communist youth in Rumania live in a state of great mental confusion, according to subsources. "You just do not know what to believe anymore," they said. "You talk to fellow students and they echo Communist slogans; and yet when it comes time to leave the country, they tell you quite openly how much they envy you. On many other occasions we heard Communists students speaking up against the regime, a dangerous past time at best. Yet, few of them are ever arrested.

"The rule, however, seems to be that you think one thing and say another. That is the best way of staying out of possible trouble."

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For those young people who do not join readily in Communist youth activities, life is pretty drab. Extra-curricular activities are restricted to walks /the cheapest/ and movies /which, if seldom interesting, are at least diverting./ "But if you live in BUCHAREST," said subsource, "even walking costs you something now --you have to pay to get into the city parks." Gay bands of youngster which once roamed BUCHAREST suburbs are now forbidden, on the theory that they are allegedly not in keeping with the dignity of the working classes in a People's Democracy. Friends gather in small groups at each others' homes instead of "going out," the home being the cheapest and safest place to meet. Subsources, as members of a quiet and poor family, spent most of their time at home either reading or playing chess. "We felt uncomfortable among others our own age /the 19-23 yr. group/," they said. "You never knew quite what to say--indeed, what you dared say. So you restricted yourself to a small group of trusted friends and let it go at that."

Seeking some kind of companionship /"I did not know of a single worker who was not a member"/, subsource boy joined the Rumanian-Soviet Friendship Society, ARLUS /ASOCIATIA PENTRU STRANGEREA LEGATURILOR CU UNIUNEA SOVIE-TICA/. But it was a disappointment to him. "I paid my dues, 4 lei a year, but did not get more than an occasional free movie out of it."

Subsource girl, who finished high school in 1951, had even a drearier life than her brother. Beaus were few and far between /few of them have money enough to spend on "dates"/, and the constant problem of work kept her mind occupied. She was able to get a part-time job as a rug-weaver, first at the firm MUNCA ARTISTICA and later at PROGRESUL TEXTIL, the only cooperative in BUCHAREST where Persian rugs are still made. Her work there was on a norm basis, with two lei paid for every thousand knots tied and 6,000 knots expected on an eight-hour shift. Some of the older and more experienced women in the factory could earn 16-18 lei a day, but subsource could rarely even tie the required 6,000 knots. Her monthly salary then was never more than 250 lei, not even enough to help out on the food for her.

/Incidentally, the PROGRESUL TEXTIL factory is at CALEA MOSILOR 98. Recently the management wanted to decrease the workers' pay to 1,96 lei per thousand knots, but the workers put up such a hue and cry that they left it at a flat 2,00 lei. There are about 20 female workers in the factory, plus a few men who wash and finish rugs./

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